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THE MINOR PROPHETS

VOL. 1.

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THE

MINOR PROPHETS,

TRANSLATED FROM THE HEBREW TEXT,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

AND A

COMMENTARY,

CRITICAL, PHILOLOGICAL, AND EXEGETICAL

BY

A. ELZAS,

Head Master of the Hull Hebrew Schools.

Translator of the "PROVERBS" and "JOB."

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BY

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

The principles on which the Author proceeded in preparing his commentary on Job and the Proverbs of Solomon have been followed also in the present work. He has laid under contribution all the means within his reach in order to ascertain the original state of the Hebrew text, and the true and unsophisticated meaning of that text. He has constantly had recourse to the collection of various readings made by Kennicott and De Rossi; he has compared the renderings of the lxx., the Targum, the Syriac, the Arabic, the Vulgate, and other ancient versions; he has consulted the best critical commentaries; he has availed himself of the results of modern philological researches; and he has conducted the whole under the influence of a disposition to place himself in the times of the sacred writers—surrounded by the scenery which they exhibit, and impressed by the different associations, both of a political and a spiritual character, which they embody. In all his investigations he has endeavoured to cherish a deep conviction of the inspired authority of the books which it has been his object to illustrate, and of the heavy responsibility which attaches to all who undertake the interpretation of the oracles of God.

A. E.

29, Francis Street, West,
January, 1873.

INTRODUCTION.

As the gift of prophecy was the greatest which God gave to men upon earth, so the Prophet, as being the immediate instrument of revealing the will of God to the people, was the greatest, the most important, the most august, venerable, and useful person in the land of Israel. The prophets were to the people the philosophers, the wise men, the divines, and the teachers of truth and godliness. By their intercourse with God, they were His mediators with the people; and their *persons* as well as their *office*, were considered as peculiarly sacred. They did not mix with the people, and only appeared in public when they came to announce the will of God.

Most of the ancient Prophets were extraordinary messengers. They were not bred up to the prophetic function: as the *office* was immediately from God, as well as the *message* they were to deliver to the people, so they had no previous education—in reference to such an office; for no man knew whom the God of Israel might please to call to announce His righteousness to the people. Several of them were taken out of the walks of *common life*. Jonah appears to have been a private person at Gath-Hepher in Galilee, before God called him to prophesy against Nineveh. Elisha was a ploughman at Abel-Meholah (1 Kings xix., v. 16) when called to the prophetic function. Zechariah appears to have been a husbandman, and a keeper of cattle (ch. xiii., v. 5). Amos was a herdsman of Tekoa, and a gatherer of sycamore fruit (ch. i., v. 1; vii. vv. 14-15); and no doubt several others of the ancient Prophets had an equally mean origin; but the office and the calling *dignified* the man.

The Prophets were accustomed to go in mean clothing; either sackcloth, hair-cloth, or coats of skin, appear to have been their ordinary clothing. They spoke against the pride and vain-glory of man; and their very garb and manner gave additional weight to the solemn words they delivered. They lived in a retired manner; and, when not sent on special errands, they employed their vacant time in the instruction of youth;—as this is probably what we are to understand by the *Schools of the Prophets*, such as those over which Elijah, Elisha, and Samuel presided; though no doubt there were some of their disciples that were made partakers of the prophetic gift.

The Prophets do not appear to have been called to a life of *celibacy*. The matrimonial state was not considered as disqualifying men from officiating in the most holy offices.

In ancient times those who were afterwards called Prophets were termed *Seers* (I Sam. ix., v. 9), "ha-roeh," the *seeing person*; he who

perceives mentally what the design of God is. Sometimes called also "Chozeh," the man who has *visions*, or supernatural *revelations* (I Kings xxii., v. 17; II Kings xvii., v. 13). They were sometimes also called *men of God*, and *messengers of God*. They had all an extraordinary commission, and had their message given them by immediate inspiration.

In this the Heathen copied after the people of God. They also had their *Prophets* and *Seers;* and hence their *Augurs* and *Auguries*, their *Haruspices*, *Priests*, and *Priestesses*, and their *oracles*; all pretending to be divinely inspired, and to declare nothing but the *truth*; for what was *truth* and *fact* among the *former*, was *affected* and *pretended* among the *latter*.

Many Prophets and Seers are mentioned in the Sacred Writings; but *fragments* and *insulated prophecies* excepted, we have the works of only *sixteen*; four of whom are termed the *former* or *larger* Prophets, and twelve the *latter* or *minor* Prophets. They have these epithets not from *priority of time*, or from *minor importance*, but merely from the places they occupy in the present arrangement of the Books of the Bible, and from the relative *size* of their productions.

At an early period the twelve minor Prophets were regarded as forming one collective body of writings, for in the Talmud, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve, are styled *the four latter Prophets*.

The Books are not arranged in the same order in the Hebrew and Septuagint texts, and in neither is the chronology exactly observed, as may be seen from the following table :—

HEBREW.	SEPTUAGINT.	CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER.
1. Hoshea.	1. Hoshea.	1. Joel.
2. Joel.	2. Amos.	2. Jonah.
3. Amos.	3. Micah.	3. Amos.
4. Obadiah.	4. Joel.	4. Hoshea.
5. Jonah.	5. Obadiah.	5. Micah.
6. Micah.	6. Jonah.	6. Nahum.
7. Nahum.	7. Nahum.	7. Zephaniah.
8. Habakkuk.	8. Habakkuk.	8. Habakkuk.
9. Zephaniah.	9. Zephaniah.	9. Obadiah.
10. Haggai.	10. Haggai.	10. Haggai.
11. Zechariah.	11. Zechariah.	11. Zechariah.
12. Malachi.	12. Malachi.	12. Malachi.

Newcome, Boothroyd, and some other translators, have adopted the order which appeared to them to be chronologically correct; but in the present work that is retained which is found in the Hebrew Bible, and followed in the Vulgate, in all the authorised European versions, and in those of Michaelis, Dathe, De Wette, and others, on the ground of the facility of reference, which the other arrangement does not afford, but which is practically of greater importance than any advantage derivable from the change.

The writings of the Prophets, the most sublime and beautiful in the world, lose much of that usefulness and effect which they are so well calculated to produce on the souls of men, from their not being more

generally understood. They are delivered in such lofty and figurative terms, and with such frequent allusions to the customs and manners of times and places the most remote. that ordinary readers cannot, without some help, be supposed capable of understanding them. It is therefore useful to make the language of prophecy as intelligible as may be, by explaining those images and figures of speech in which it most frequently abounds.

The obscurity which sometimes attends prophecy does not always proceed from the circumstances or subject; it frequently proceeds from the highly poetical and figurative style in which prophecy is, for the most part, conveyed, and of which it will be proper to give some account. To speak of *all* the rhetorical figures with which the Prophets adorn their style, would lead us into a field too wide, and would be more the province of the rhetorician than the commentator. It will be sufficient for our purpose to attend to the most common of them; consisting of

1. ALLEGORY,
2. PARABLE, and
3. METAPHOR;

and then to consider the *sources* from which the Prophets borrow their images in these figures, and the sense which they wish to convey by them.

By *Allegory*, the first of the figures mentioned, is meant that mode of speech in which the writer or speaker means to convey a different idea from what the words in their obvious and primary signification bear. Thus, Jer. iv., v. 3: "Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns," is to be understood not of *tillage*, but of *repentance*. And: "The rowers have brought thee in great waters, the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas" (Ezek. xxvii., v. 26), allude not to the fate of a *ship*, but of a *city*, &c.

To this figure the *Parable*, in which the Prophets frequently speak, is nearly allied. It consists in the application of some feigned narrative to some real truth, which might have been less striking, or more disagreeable, if expressed in plain terms. Such is the following one of Isaiah (v., 1-2):

"My beloved had a vineyard,
"On a very high and fruitful hill:
"And he fenced it,
"And cleared it of the stones,
"And he planted it with the choicest vine;
"And he built a tower in the midst of it,
"And he hewed out also a lake therein:
"And he expected that it would bring forth grapes;
"But it brought forth poisonous berries."

The 7th verse tells us that the *vineyard* was the *house of Israel*, which had so ill requited the favour which God had shown it, etc.

But of all the figures used by the Prophets the most frequent is the *Metaphor*, by which words are transferred from their primitive and plain to a secondary and figurative meaning. This figure, common in all poetry, and in all languages, is of indispensable necessity in Scripture;

which, having occasion to speak of Divine and spiritual matters, could do it only by terms borrowed from sensible and material objects. Hence it is that the sentiments, actions, and corporeal parts, not only of man, but also of inferior creatures, are ascribed to God Himself; it being otherwise impossible for us to form any conceptions of His pure essence and incommunicable attributes. But though the Prophets partly from necessity, and partly from choice, are thus profuse in the use of *metaphors*, they do not appear, like other writers, to have the liberty of using them as fancy directed. The same set of images, however diversified in the manner of applying them, is always used, both in *allegory* and *metaphor*, to denote the same subjects, to which they are in a manner appropriated. This peculiar characteristic of the Hebrew poetry might perhaps be owing to some rules taught in the prophetic schools, which did not allow the same latitude in this respect as other poetry. Whatever it may be owing to, the uniform manner in which the Prophets apply these images, tends greatly to illustrate the prophetic style; and, therefore, it will be proper now to consider the *sources* from which those images are most frequently derived, and the *subjects* and *ideas* which they severally denote. These sources may be classed under four heads:

1. Natural.
2. Artificial.
3. Religious, and
4. Historical.

I. The first and most copious, as well as the most pleasing source of images in the prophetic writings, as in all other poetry, is *Nature*; and the principal images drawn from nature, together with their application, are the following:—

The *sun*, *moon*, and *stars*, the highest objects in the natural world, figuratively represent *kings*, *queens*, and *princes* or *rulers*; the highest in the world politic. "The moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed." "I will cover the heavens, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light."

Light and *darkness* are used figuratively for *joy* and *sorrow*, *prosperity* and *adversity*. "We look for *light*, but behold *darkness*; for *brightness*, but we walk in *obscurity*." (Isa. lix., v. 9.)

An uncommon degree of light denotes an uncommon degree of joy and prosperity, and *vice versa*. "The light of the *moon* shall be as the light of the *sun*, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold." (Isa. xxx., v. 26.)

Immoderate rains, *hail*, *floods*, *deep waters*, *torrents*, *and inundations* denote *judgments* and *destruction*. "I will rain upon him with an overflowing shower, and great hailstones" (Ezek. xxxviii., v. 22); "Waters are coming from the north, and shall become an overflowing torrent." (Jer. xlvii., v. 2).

Fire also, and the *east wind*, parching and hurtful, frequently denote the same. "They shall cut down thy choice cedars, and shall cast them into the *fire*." (Jer. xxii., v. 7.) "He drove her forth with his *rough blast* on the *east wind's* day." (Isa. xxvii., v. 8.)

Wind in general is often taken in the same sense. (See Hosea viii., v. 7.

Lebanon and *Carmel;* the one remarkable for its *height* and stately cedars, was the image of *majesty, strength,* or anything *great* or *noble.* "And he shall hew the thickets of the forest with iron, and *Lebanon* shall fall by a mighty hand." (Isa. x., v. 34). "He is as a tall cedar in *Lebanon.*" (Ezek. xxxi., v. 3.) The other mountain *(Carmel)* fruitful, and abounding in vines and olives, denoted *beauty* and *fertility.* "The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the beauty of *Carmel.*" (Isa. xxxv., v. 2).

The *vine* alone is a frequent image of the Jewish Church. "I have planted thee a choice *vine.*" (Jer. ii., v. 21.)

Lions, eagles, sea-monsters, or *any animal of prey* are figures frequently used for cruel and oppressive *tyrants* and *conquerors.* "A *lion* is gone up from his thicket." (Jer. iv., v. 7.) "A great *eagle* came unto Lebanon, and took the highest branch of the cedar." (Ezek. xvii., v. 3.) "Thou art like a *crocodile* in the seas." (Ezek. xxxii., v. 2).

II. The ordinary *occupations* and *customs* of life, with the few *arts* practised at the time, were another source from which the Prophets derived many of their figures, particularly :—From *husbandry* in all its parts, and from its *implements.* "Sow to yourselves righteousness, reap according to piety, break up for yourselves the fallow ground." (Hoshea x., v. 12.) "Put ye in the *sickle,* for the harvest is ripe." (Joel iii., v. 13.) *Threshing,* the operation of which was performed on rising grounds, where the *chaff* was driven away by the wind, while the *grain* remained; a fit emblem of the *fate of the wicked,* and of the *salvation* of the just. "Behold, I have made thee a threshing-wain : a new corn-drag armed with pointed teeth; thou shalt thresh and beat small the mountains, and the hills shalt thou make as chaff. Thou shalt *fan* them, and the wind shall disperse them; and the whirlwind shall scatter them." (Isa. xli., vv. 15-16).

The *vintage* and *wine-press* also furnish many images, obvious enough in their application. "The *wine-press* is full, the vats overflow, for their wickedness is great." (Joel iii., v. 13.) "I have trodden the *wine-press* alone—I will tread down the people in mine anger." (Isa. lxiii., v. 3).

As the *vintage* was gathered with *shouting* and *rejoicing,* the ceasing of the vintage-shouting is frequently one of the figures that denote *misery* and *desolation.* "And wine from the presses I have made to cease—the *shouting* is no *shouting.*" (Jer. xlviii., v. 33).

From the occupation of *tending cattle,* we have many images. "Woe unto the *shepherds* that destroy and scatter the *sheep* of my pasture." (Jer. xxiii., v. 1.) The *people* are the *flock; teachers* and *rulers* the *shepherds.*

It was customary in deep mournings, to *shave* the *head* and *beard,* to retire to the *house-tops* (which in those countries are flat, and furnished with little chambers adapted for the purposes of devotion, or of sequestered grief,) also to sing dirges at funerals, and to accompany them with a mournful sort of music; and from these and the like circumstances, images are frequently borrowed by the Prophets to denote the *greatest danger,* and the *deepest distress.* See Jer. xlviii., vv. 36-38.

According to the barbarous custom of those times, conquerors *drove their captives* before them almost *naked*, and they were exposed to the intolerable heat of the sun, and the inclemencies of the weather. They afterwards employed them frequently in *grinding at the hand mill*, hence *nakedness* and *grinding at the mill*, and *sitting on the ground* (the posture in which they wrought) express *captivity*. "Descend and sit in the dust, O virgin daughter of Babylon—take the millstones—thy *nakedness* shall be uncovered."

From the method of *refining metals in the furnace*, images are often borrowed to denote the *judgment* inflicted by God on His people, with a view to cleanse them from their sins, as metal from its dross. "Israel is—dross in the midst of the furnace." (Ezek. xxii., v. 18.) "He shall sit refining and purifying the silver." (Mal. iii., v. 3).

Among the other few arts, from which the Hebrew poets derive some of their images, are those of the *fuller* and *potter*. (Jer. xviii., v. 1; Mal. iii., v. 2), of which the application is obvious.—No less so is that of images derived from *fishing, fowling*, and the implements belonging to them; the *hook, net, pit, snare*, etc., which generally denote *captivity* or *destruction*. "I will send for many *fishers*, and they shall fish them—and for many *hunters*, and they shall hunt them—for their iniquity is not concealed from mine eyes." (Jer. xvi., vv. 16-17.) "I will put *hooks* in thy jaws." (Ezek. xxix., v. 4.) "Terror, and the *pit*, and the *snare*, are upon thee, O inhabitant of the land." (Isa. xxiv., v. 17.)

III. Religion, and things connected with it, furnished many images to the sacred poets.

The *ceremonial law*, and especially its distinctions between things *clean* and *unclean*, furnished a number of images, all obvious in their application. (Isa. i., v. 16; Ezek. xxxvi., v. 17).

The *killing of sacrifices* and *feasting upon them*, serve as metaphors for *slaughter*. "The Lord hath a sacrifice in Bozra." (Isa. xxxiv., v. 6.) "Gather yourselves from every side, to my sacrifice which I make for you, even a great sacrifice upon the mountains of Israel." (Ezek. xxxix., v. 17).

The *Pontifical robes*, which were very splendid, suggested several images, expressive of the *glory* of the Jewish nation. (Isa. lxi., v. 10; Ezek. xvi., v. 10).

The Prophets wore a *hairy upper garment;* false prophets wore the like, in imitation of true ones; and to this there are frequent allusions. "They shall not wear a hairy garment to deceive." (Zech. xiii., v. 4).

From the *pots*, and other *vessels* and *utensils* of the temple, are likewise borrowed a few metaphors obvious enough without explanation. "Every pot in Jerusalem and in Judea shall be holiness." (Zech. xiv., v. 21).

The Prophets have likewise many images that allude to the *idolatrous rites* of the neighbouring nations, to their *groves* and *high places*. (Isa. xxvii., v. 9), and to the worship paid to their idols, *Baal, Moloch, Chemosh, Gad, Meni, Astaroth*, etc. (Ezek. viii., vv. 10-14).

IV. Many of the metaphors and images used by the Prophets are likewise borrowed from *history*, especially sacred.

From *chaos*. "I beheld the earth, and lo! a desolate waste! The heavens also, and there was no light." (Jer. iv., v. 23.) "He shall stretch over her the line of desolation, and let fall the plummet of emptiness." (Isa. xxxiv., v. 11).

From the *deluge*. "The flood-gates on high are opened, and the foundations of the earth tremble." (Isa. xxiv., v. 18).

From the *destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah*. "And her streams shall be turned into pitch, and her dust into sulphur, and her land shall become burning pitch." (Isa. xxxiv., v. 9).

The *exodus* and *deliverance from Egypt*, is frequently used to shadow forth other great deliverances. (Isa. xi., vv. 15-16; xliii., vv. 16-19; li., vv. 9-10).

From the *descent on Sinai*. "The Lord is coming from His place; He will descend, and tread upon the heights of the earth, the mountains shall be molten under Him." (Micah I., vv. 3-4).

The Minor Prophets have generally been considered more obscure and difficult of interpretation than any of the other prophetical books of the Holy Scriptures. Beside the avoidance of a minute and particular style of description, and the exhibition of the more general aspects of events only, which are justly regarded as essentially characteristic of prophecy, and the exuberance of imagery, which was so admirably calculated to give effect to the oracles delivered by the inspired Seers, but which to us does not possess the vividness and perspicuity which it did to those to whom it was originally exhibited, there are peculiarities attaching more or less to each of the writers, arising either from his matter, or from the manner of its treatment, which present difficulties of no ordinary magnitude to common readers, and many that are calculated to exercise the ingenuity, and, in no small degree, to perplex the mind of the more experienced interpreter. We are frequently left to guess historical circumstances from what we otherwise know of the features of the times, and sometimes we have no other means of ascertaining their character than what are furnished by the descriptive terms employed in the predictions themselves. Though in such cases general ideas may be collected respecting the persons or things which are presented to view in the text, yet we want the historical commentary which would elucidate and give point to its various particulars. The accounts contained in the books of Kings and Chronicles are frequently too brief to furnish us with a key to many of the prophecies which were fulfilled during the period which they embrace.

Against none of these Prophets has the charge of obscurity been brought with greater appearance of justice than against Hoshea, whose prophecies are obviously, for the most part, mere compendia, or condensed notes of what he publicly delivered, though preserving to a considerable extent, the logical and verbal forms which characterised his discourses. Besides a profusion of metaphors, many of which are derived from sources little accordant with the dictates of occidental taste, we find in his book a conciseness of expression, an abruptness of transition, a paucity of connecting particles, and changes in person, number, and gender, to which nothing equal occurs in any of the other Prophets.

The period of time within which the authors of the books flourished, includes the entire prophetic cycle of more than four hundred years. It

is unquestionably the most eventful in the history of the Hebrews. It embraces the introduction of image-worship, and that of the Phœnicean idolatry, with all its attendant evils, among the Israelites; the regicidal murders and civil wars which shook their kingdom to its centre; the corruptions of the Jewish state in consequence of its adoption of the idolatrous practices of the northern tribes; the Assyrian and Egyptian alliances; the irruption of the Syrian, Assyrian, and Chaldean armies into Palestine; the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities; the Persian conquests; the release of the Jews, and their restoration to their own land; and the state of affairs at Jerusalem during the governorship of Nehemiah.

Upon all these various events and circumstances, the predictions, warnings, threatenings, promises and moral lessons, have, in a multiplicity of aspects, a more or less pointed and important bearing.

HOSHEA.

Respecting the origin of this Prophet nothing is known beyond what is stated in the title, verse 1. If, as is now generally agreed Jeroboam II. died about the year B.C. 784, and Hezekiah began to reign about B.C. 728, it would appear from the same verse that the period of his ministry must have embraced, at the very least fifty-six years. He was cotemporary with Isaiah, Micah, and Amos, and, like the last-mentioned Prophet, directed his prophecies chiefly against the kingdom of the ten tribes.

From the general tenor of his book, and from the history of the times contained in the Books of Kings, he manifestly lived in a very corrupt age.

Though he occasionally mentions Judah, yet the entire scene is laid in the land of Israel, where, there can be little doubt, he lived and taught.

With the exception of the first and third chapters, which are in prose, the book is rhythmical, and abounds in highly figurative and metaphorical language. The sentences are in general brief and unconnected; the unexpected change of persons is of frequent occurrence; number and gender are often neglected; and the similes and metaphors are frequently so intermixed, that no small degree of attention is required in order to discover their exact bearing and force. He is more scanty in his use of the particles than the other Prophets, which adds not a little to the difficulty of interpreting his prophecies. Of all the Prophets he is, in point of language, the most obscure and hard to be understood.

HOSHEA.

CHAPTER I.

1. The word of the Lord which came unto Hoshea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam, the son of Joash, king of Israel.
2. THE FIRST SPEECH OF THE LORD TO HOSHEA. The Lord said to Hoshea: "Go, take unto thee a wife "addicted to harlotries, and beget children ad- "dicted to harlotries; for the land is given up to

1.—*Hoshea.*—See Introduction.—*The Son of Beeri.*—According to the Talmud (Megillah, fol. 15) Hoshea's father was also a prophet, and it was he who by inspiration wrote the two verses in Isaiah chap. viii., vv. 19, 20, which—not being sufficient to form a separate volume—were added to Isaiah.—*Jeroboam the son of Joash.*—Commonly called *Jeroboam the Second*, to distinguish him from the son of Nebat. This monarch carried on very successful wars with his Northern neighbours, and recovered out of their hands the territories of which they had taken possession, but he was a very wicked character, and greatly promoted idolatry in Israel.—See II Kings xiv., vv. 23-28. It may be that Hoshea—after the death of Jeroboam II.—left Israel to dwell in Judah, and that from thence he also sent forth his exhortations to Israel. Perhaps therefore we are told here, that he prophesied in the days of Jeroboam II. to inform us that during the reign of that monarch he dwelt in the land of Israel.

2.—*To Hoshea.*—So the Syriac, and is in accordance with the Talmud (Pesachim, fol. 87). See also Aben Ezra.—*Addicted to harlotries.*—The transaction here described is clogged with almost insuperable difficulties; and, as may be expected, has given rise to very different modes of interpretation. By the Talmud (Pesachim, fol. 87), and among English expositors who are of the same opinion, I may mention Bishop Horsley and Dr. Henderson, the things specified are considered to have actually taken place in the outward history of the prophet. Abarbanel, Kimchi, Maimonides, Ruffinus, Marckius, Pococke, and others regard the whole in the light of internal prophetic

vision. The Targum, Calvin, Luther, Osiander, Rivetus, Rosenmuller, Hitzig, Fuerstenthal, and others, treat it as a parabolical representation, in which the prophet appropriates to himself imaginary circumstances, aptly fitted to impress the minds of those whom he addressed with a sense of their wickedness, and the punishment to which it exposed them.

Upon these various opinions I beg to offer the following remarks :—

It seems to be granted on all hands that Chapter I. (no matter whether its contents be a narration of an outward real transaction, or an inward real vision, or a message of God to the nation under the form of a parable) forms a sort of introduction or key to the subsequent oracle (Chapter II.), in the same manner as Chapter III. prepares the hearer or reader for Chapter IV. In either of the three views, it is absolutely necessary that Hoshea, when delivering his oracle, should have given his hearers such an explanation about it as Chapter I. contains. In other words, Chapter I. forms part of the oracle, and was addressed to the people, and in this view we are confirmed by the last verse of the first Chapter, which appears already in the form of an address.

Bearing this in mind I proceed now to examine the different opinions.

According to the Talmud the transaction was real and outward in the history of Hoshea. It *may* have been so. We must remember, that it is the style of the Scriptures, and of all languages, sometimes to give to persons, and likewise to inanimate things, the qualities they formerly had, though they have them no more. Thus Moses's rod is called a rod, when it was changed into a serpent. Why should we then not easily conceive that the wife of Hoshea had only *been addicted to harlotry* before he married her? There being nothing in this action of marrying such a woman that was contrary to the law of God, which only prohibited *the priests* to marry such women, and supposed when it allowed others to marry them, that they were to behave themselves modestly and virtuously for the future. There is nothing in this unworthy of the prophet, and it exactly answers God's dealing towards that people whom he espoused and adopted, notwithstanding their former wickedness ; and the example of Hoshea's wife, who had given over her base and scandalous ways of living, and to whom the prophet did the honour of marrying her, was very proper to make the Israelites understand, that they were indispensably obliged to alter their wicked way of living, if they would have God to be favourable to them, lest, after having given them so many instances of his love, he should be provoked to divorce and abandon them.

As regards my own opinion of the view to be adopted, I do not see any essential difference between the one which takes the whole as an inward vision, and the other which considers it as a mere parable. In both cases the matter was imparted by God, and was to be re-imparted by the prophet to the nation. The text admits of either explanation. The scope of the oracle, which was, to make a vivid impression upon the hearers, so as to render them the more fit for the full appreciation of the subsequent oracle, would have been accomplished equally well

3. "harlotry, departing from the Lord." So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim; and

in either case. The prophet is to represent God in his then position to the Jewish nation. For that purpose he must have a wife as a type of the nation; that wife must be addicted to harlotry, to represent the moral state of the nation; and there must be children, to represent the nation individually. All this the prophet must have at once. Accordingly it is said: "Go, take a woman addicted to harlotry, and children addicted to harlotry, *for*," etc. Nor can it be without good reason that Hoshea mentions the name of the woman. It has certainly a meaning. This may be either the symbolical signification of the names, as most of the Jewish interpreters, Jerome, and many of the modern commentators, as Rosenmuller, Hengstenberg, and others suppose, or, what appears to me more probable (though I cannot bring historical testimony in support of my supposition) this Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, might have been a woman generally known at the time for her profligacy, acting, perhaps, a prominent part in the orgies of the idolatrous Jews. The natural consequence of the faithless conduct of the nation towards God is, as the parallel type of the wife of Hoshea shows, *Jezreel*, *Lo-Ruchamah*, *Lo-Ammi*, (God will scatter; Not pitied; Not my people;) but in case of repentance: *Ammi* and *Ruchamah* (My people; Pitied.) These names are mere personifications of abstract ideas, relating here to the manner in which God will act towards the nation.

I shall now adduce a parallel, where we also find a prophet making himself the subject of a parable.

We read in Jeremiah xxv., v. 15.: "For thus saith the Lord God "of Israel to me: Take this cup of wrath-wine at my hands, and "cause all the nations to whom I send thee, to drink it. v. 16. That "they may drink, and stagger, and rage, because of the sword which "I will send among them. v. 17. And I took the cup out of the hand "of the Lord, and caused all the nation to drink, unto whom the Lord "had sent me." Then (v. 18 and following) follows a list of these nations, which is thus summed up (v. 26): "And all the kings of the "north, far and near, one after the other, and all the kingdoms of the "world, which are upon the face of the earth; and the king of "Sheshach shall drink after them." We have here a narration of what seems to be an outward transaction, as in Hoshea. (That in Hoshea the *third person* is used of the prophet himself, and here the *first person*, is not the slightest consequence, if it be granted that Hoshea is the author of the first chapter.) Here, as in Hoshea, not the slightest hint is given, that the circumstances are fictitious. Jeremiah exhibits himself here as fully as the representative of God inflicting punishment, as Hoshea represents God in his relation towards the Israelites. But who would venture to say *that Jeremiah indeed went to all the kings and all the nations of the earth, and making them all drink of a cup of wine?* In Hoshea therefore, as well as here, I think it really was a figurative or parabolic representation or illustration.—*Children addicted to harlotries.*—By the power of example.

4. she conceived, and bare him a son. And the Lord said unto him: "Call his name JEZREEL: for yet a "little while, and I will avenge the blood of "Jezreel upon the house of Jehu, and will cause "the kingdom of the house of Israel to cease.
5. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that I will "break the bow of Israel in the valley of Jezreel."
6. And she conceived again, and bare a daughter. And He said unto him: "Call her name "LO-RUCHAMAH: for I will no more have mercy

4.—*Jezreel.*—*i.e.*, God will scatter, from "Zara," *to scatter*, disperse, as in Zech. x., v. 7. So the Targum, and Tosephoth Pesachim, fol. 87. Kimchi, however, refers this to Jeroboam II., who carried on successful wars with his northern neighbours. His interpretation is contrary to the design of the passage. *Jezreel* was also the proper name of a city in the tribe of Issachar, on the brow of the central valley in the great plain of the same name, and the royal residence of Ahab, and his successors. It was here Jehu exercised acts of the greatest cruelty, II Kings x., vv. 11, 14, 17. These acts were speedily to be avenged in the extinction of the royal family, and the entire cessation of the Israelitish state. It had been announced to Jehu that his sons should occupy the throne till the fourth generation, II Kings x., v. 30. Two of these generations had passed away by the time of the prophet—Jeroboam being the great grand-son. In the following generation the prediction received its accomplishment.

5.—*The bow of Israel.*—Her military prowess. The valley here mentioned, afterwards called *Esdraelon*, was famous for the battles fought there from the most ancient times. It consists of the broad elevated plain which stretches from the Jordan to the Mediterranean, near Mount Carmel, and is well adapted for military operations. Dr. C. D. Clarke observes: "Jews, Gentiles, Saracens, Christian Crusaders, Anti-Christian Frenchmen, Egyptians, Persians, Druses, Turks, and Arabs, warriors out of every nation which is under heaven, have pitched their tents upon the plains of Esdraelon, and have beheld the various banners of their nations wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon." Here the Israelites made a stand against the Assyrians, but being overpowered by numbers were obliged to succumb to the enemy.

6.—*Lo-Ruchamah.*—Not having obtained mercy, or *not pitied.*—*How could I forgive them.*—So Fuerstenthal. The Targum, the Talmud, and the Midrash also render the verb "Naso" here *to forgive*. Kimchi and Aben Ezra: "I will transfer them to the land of their enemies." Bishop Horsley renders: "For I will no more cherish with tenderness the house of Israel, inasmuch as to be perpetually forgiving them." Houbigant has given the same sense. Some think the weaker sex of this child represented the weak state of Israel, under their last kings.

"upon the house of Israel; for how could I
7. "forgive them! Yet, upon the house of Judah, I
"will have mercy, and will help them by the Lord
"their God; but I will not help them by bow,
"nor by sword, nor by battle, by horses, nor by
"horsemen."
8. Now when she had weaned Lo-Ruchamah, she con-
9. ceived, and bare a son. Then He said: "Call his
"name LO-AMMI: for ye are not my people, and I
"will not be your God."

CHAPTER II.

1. Nevertheless the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass, that instead of its being said to them: "Ye are not my people," it shall be said unto them: "Ye are

7.—*I will have mercy.*—I will spare them as a kingdom after Israel has been carried away into captivity by the Assyrians.—*And will help them.*—Remarkably fulfilled in the supernatural defeat of the army of the Assyrians. See II Kings xix., v. 35.

8.—*When she had weaned.*—The mention here made of the weaning of Lo-Ruchamah seems designed to fill up the narrative.—*And bare a son.*—The Targum (who treats the whole chapter as a parable) paraphrases this: "They continued in their wicked ways."

9.—*Lo-Ammi.*—*i.e.*, not my people.—*And I will not be your God.*—The word "God" is not added here by any of the ancient versions or MSS., and yet the construction requires it. Houbigant thinks the present reading *lo eheyeh lachem* (I will not be to you) a corruption of the word *eloheychem* (your God).

1.—*Nevertheless.*—The Prophet here turns abruptly from reproof to consolation, and quite naturally. After having told the nation (ch. i., v. 6) that God would no more have mercy upon them, and (v. 9) that they were no more God's people, nor He their God, the Prophet probably thought they might despair and think: "If God is no more with us how can we then stand?" He, therefore, comes now to them with words of consolation and says: "Repent! Then instead of it being said to you: *Ye are not God's people* (on account of your wicked ways), it shall be said to you *ye are the children of the living God*, and He will have mercy upon you."

2. the sons of the living God." And the children of Judah, and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and appoint to themselves one chief, and depart out of the land: for great is the day of Jezreel.

3. Say ye to your brethren, O Ammi,
   And to your sisters, O Ruchamah,
4. Plead with your mother, plead:
   For she is not my wife, nor I her husband:
   That she may remove her harlotries out of her sight,
   And her adulteries from between her breasts;
5. Lest I strip and leave her naked,
   And set her as in the day when she was born;
   And make her as a desert,
   And make her as a dry land,
   And slay her with thirst;

2.—*One chief.*—This refers to the re-union of all the tribes, and their return under Zerubbabel to their own land.—*Out of the land.*—The country of Babylon, not excluding those other regions of the East in which the descendants of the different tribes were found.—*Jezreel.*—This is used here in a different acceptation from that in which it is taken (ch. i., v. 4.) That of *sowing* is alone appropriate. Illustrious should be the period when the tribes should again be sown in their own country. Compare ch. ii., v. 25; Jerem. xxxi., v. 27.

3.—*O Ammi.*—The pious and faithful worshippers of God are here summoned to urge upon their nation the consideration of its wickedness in having departed from God. Of these the *nation* of the ten tribes was the *Mother.*

4.—*For she is not my wife.*—Dathe and Rückert render "Ki" *that*, and interpret: "Argue the point with your nation, and show her that in consequence of her wicked conduct, all relations between us have ceased." The casual signification of the conjunction, however, is preferable. The words which it introduces form a parenthesis; and "Vesather," which though future, is to be rendered potentially: *that she may remove*, is connected with "Ribu" *plead ye.* By *harlotries* and *adulteries* are meant the tokens or indications of lewd character:—boldness of countenance, and an immodest exposure of the breasts. Both forms are reduplicate, to express the enormity of the evil. What the Prophet has in view, is the reckless and unblushing manner in which the Israelitish nation practised idolatry. The Sept. reads: "From *my* face," improperly in this connection.

5.—*Lest I strip.*—Lest I expose her to infamy, want, and punishment. The punishment of adulteresses among the ancient Germans,

6. Neither have mercy upon her children;
Because they are children addicted to harlotries.
7. For their mother hath played the harlot;
Their parent hath acted shamefully,
When she said: "I will go after my lovers,
"Who give me my bread, and my water,
"My wool and my flax, mine oil and my drink."
8. Therefore, behold! I will hedge up thy way with thorns,
And raise a wall, that she may not find her paths.

was this: "They shaved off her hair, stripped her naked in the presence of her relatives, and in this state drove her from the house of her husband." — *When she was born.*—They should be placed in circumstances analogous to those in which they had originally been in Egypt. Comp. Ezek. xvi., v. 4; xxiii., vv. 25, 26, 28, 29.—*As a dry land.*—The Israelites, if obedient, were promised a land flowing with milk and honey; but, should they be disobedient, the reverse. And this is what God here threatens against disobedient Israel.

6.—*Neither have mercy.*—Individuals might expect that they would escape, and not be treated as the nation in its collective capacity; but God here declares, that He would treat them according to the demerits of their individual wickedness.

7.—*Their parent.*—"Horah" is the feminine participle of "harah," *to conceive, be pregnant.* The Targum and Rashi suppose *teachers* to be here meant; but the term is merely a synonyme of "Em," *mother,* in the preceding hemistich.—*Acted shamefully.*—Interpreters are not agreed respecting the rendering of "hobisha." In most instances, in which the word occurs, it certainly has the transitive signification; but here the intransitive seems more appropriate.—*I will go.*—The "he" *cohortative,* lengthening the future, expresses a decided purpose, desire, or bent of mind; *it is my settled determination* to follow those who richly supply my wants in return for my religious services.—*My lovers.*—This term, which is here employed metaphorically, to denote *idols,* is seldom used except in a bad sense. This interpretation, which is that of Kimchi and Abarbanel, is more in keeping with the character of the prophecy than that suggested by the Targum, which takes the word in the sense of *idolaters,* or *idolatrous nations,* such as Assyria, etc. —*My bread.*—The articles specified, comprehend both the necessaries and the luxuries of ancient Hebrew life.—*My drink.*—The Targum: "All my sustenance." Dr. Wheeler: "Strong drink."

8.—*I will hedge up thy way.*—The Sept., Syr., and Arab. read "*her* way"; but most likely in order to produce uniformity in the use of the affix. The metaphor here employed is borrowed from the condition of a traveller, whose progress is interrupted by a hedge thrown across his path, or who can no longer pass through the gap of an enclosure which used to be in his way; and who is consequently reduced to straits and

9. And she shall eagerly pursue her lovers,
But she shall not overtake them;
She shall seek, but shall not find them;
Then shall she say:
"I will go and return to my first husband,
"For then was it better with me than now."
10. For she did not know that I gave her
The corn, and the wine, and the oil;
And furnished her abundantly with silver and gold,
Which they made into images of Baal.

difficulties. Turned out of his accustomed course, he is bewildered, and strives in vain to extricate himself.—*Raise a wall.*—The external hindrance which the captivity interposed between the ten tribes, and the objects of their idolatrous attachment.

9.—*Then shall she say.*—Convinced by bitter experience of the folly of idolatry, the Israelites would renounce it, and return to the service of God. The word "Az," *then*, designates the period previous to the apostacy of the ten tribes, when in reward for external obedience, they enjoyed temporal blessings. So the Targum.

10.—*Which they made into images of Baal.*– Hitzig supposes the golden calves set up at Bethel and Dan to be meant, but as it does not appear that the name of "Baal" was ever applied to them, his interpretation is groundless. See ch. viii., v. 4; which also clearly proves that by "Asoo lebaal" here we are *not* to understand the consecration of the silver and gold to the service of Baal, but the actual conversion of these precious metals into *images* of that idol, or at least into plating with which to cover such as were made of wood. The rendering of Gesenius "which *they offered* to Baal," is equally objectionable. Hengstenberg attempts to support the position that *consecration* is meant; but his reasons are altogether futile. The very passage which he quotes as parallel (Ezek. xvi., vv. 17-18) is directly opposed to his exegesis of the phrase. *Baal* was perhaps the most ancient of all the gods worshipped in the East. He was, according to Dr. Münter, the representative of the sun, the generative power in the eastern mythology, and had associated with him, Astarte, the female power, which was viewed as representing the moon. Gesenius, however, is of opinion, that under these names, the planets Jupiter and Venus were worshipped. From the frequency with which his name occurs, in compound Phœnician names, as Hannibal, Hasdrubal, etc., the worship of Baal appears to have been common among the people; and from them, especially the Syrians, it was borrowed by the Israelites. The worship of Baal became prevalent even in Judah, in the days of Ahaz, and though abolished by the pious king Josiah, was revived by Manasseh. In Israel it rapidly gained ground after the introduction of the worship of the golden calves by Jeroboam, and reached its height in the reigns of Ahab and Hoshea.

11. Therefore I will take back
My corn in its time, and my wine in its season;
And I will recover my wool and my flax,
Designed to cover her nakedness.
12. And now I will expose her vileness
In the sight of her lovers,
And none shall deliver her out of my hand.
13. I will also cause all her joy to cease—
Her festivals, her new moons, and her sabbaths,
And all her solemn feasts.
14. I will also lay waste her vines, and her fig-trees,
Of which she said: "These are my hire
"Which my lovers have given me;"
And I will turn them into a forest,
And the beasts of the field shall devour them.

11.—*I will take back.*—The verb "Shub," *to return, turn back,* is frequently used adverbially. So here, *I will again take away,* or *take back, i.e.,* deprive of. God vindicates His right to the various articles specified, because they had been bestowed by His providence; calling them *His,* with obvious reference to v. 5, in which Israel had called them *hers.* The verb "natzal," expresses the idea of *rescuing* or *recovering* what was unjustly held.—*Designed to cover.*—Houbigant, Dathe, Horsley, Newcome, Boothroyd, and others alter the original without any necessity.

12.—*Her vileness.*—Targum: "her shame;" Arab.: "her nakedness." This exposure was to be made in the very presence of the idols which Israel had served, none of which should be able to afford deliverance. By a prosopopœia, the idols are first endowed with the faculty of vision, and then their utter imbecility is strikingly set forth.

13.—*Cause her joy to cease.*—The country was to be desolated by the invading armies, and all the festivities and seasons of religious observance were to cease. The different terms here employed, are those by which the seasons of worship, etc., appointed by God, in the Mosaic law, are designated; but it is not hence to be inferred, that such were observed according to His appointment. While from habit they continued to keep them as portions of time unappropriated to the ordinary occupations of life, they were doubtless converted into seasons of carnal indulgence.

14.—*Vines—fig-trees.*—Plantations of vines and fig-trees. They should be left uncultivated on the removal of the inhabitants into foreign regions.—*My hire.*—The hire of a harlot; this is peculiarly appropriate in this connection.—*Beasts of the field.*—This must be taken literally, and not figuratively, as Abarbanel does—supposing the heathen invaders to be meant.

15. And I will visit upon her the days of the Baals,
On which she burned incense unto them;
And decked herself with rings and trinkets,
And followed her lovers;
But me she forgot! saith the Lord.

16. Nevertheless, behold! I will allure her;
And though I lead her into the desert,
Yet I will speak comfortably unto her.
17. And thence I will give her her vineyards,
And the valley of Achor for a door of hope;

15.—*The Baals.*—The idols which they had set up to Baal in the cities and different parts of the country, as well as in their private houses. Hence the names *Baal-Gad, Baal-Hermon, Baal-Meon.* By "the days of the Baals" are meant the days specially devoted to the celebration of idolatrous rites. To cause grateful odours to ascend from the altars, was considered peculiarly acceptable to the objects of worship. It appears to have originated partly in the gratification afforded by agreeable smells, and partly in the custom of burning perfumes in rooms, etc., with a view to purify them from noxious vapours.—*Trinkets.*—The Targum, Syr., and Rosenmüller: "pearls."—The Prophet has in view the gay ornaments in which the Israelites decked themselves on idolatrous holidays. Their entirely abandoning themselves to the service of idols, and their dereliction of the God of their fathers, are brought forward at the conclusion of this description of their conduct, in order to heighten the aggravation of their guilt.

16.—*Nevertheless.*—The original cannot, with any propriety, be rendered, "therefore," (as the Auth. Vers.) in this connection, if the following words are to be regarded as promissory of good, and not as containing a further threatening of punishment. And that they *are* to be so regarded, the subsequent context sufficiently shows. It thus marks the unexpected transition from threats to promises.—*And though I lead her.*—As the Israelites were to be forcibly removed from their land, by the King of Assyria, there is a singular want of propriety in assigning to the "vau" in "Veholachtihah" its usual copulative power. It is obviously to be understood exceptively, or as introducing a kind of parenthetical sentence, expressive of what was to take place in the history of the ten tribes previously to their conversion from idolatry. For this signification of the "vau" see Ruth ii., v. 13: I Sam. i, v. 5; Eccles. ix., v. 16; Mal. ii., v. 14.—Bauer thinks the desert between Assyria and Judea is meant, through which the Israelites were to be conducted on their release; Doederlein explains it of Judea itself, at that time desolate and waste. According to my opinion, the country of Babylon is intended.

17.—*And thence.*—The Israelites had altogether forfeited their possession; and they could not acquire a new right to them, except in

And she shall sing there as in the days of her youth,
Even as in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

18. And it shall be in that day, saith the Lord,
That thou shalt call me ISHI,
And shalt call me no more BAALI;

19. For I will take the names of the Baals out of her mouth,
And they shall no more be mentioned by their name.

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the way of a fresh grant from the Lord. This grant He here promises them, as He had of old promised Canaan to their fathers when in the wilderness.—"Mishshom," *thence*, means returning from the wilderness; just as "Shamah" indicates the homeward direction of the exiles. To take "Mishshom" as a particle of time, which Gesenius proposes, is less suitable.—"The Valley of Achor" lay in the vicinity of Jericho, and was noted in the sacred history for the judgment inflicted upon Achan (Josh. vii., v., 26). From Isai. lxv., v. 10, it appears to have been a fertile and pleasant region; and on this account alone it is thought by Calvin, Zanchius, Rivetus, and others, to be referred to by our Prophet. Most of the Rabbinical commentators, however, and, after them many Christian interpreters, consider allusion to be made to the name, which signifies *trouble* or molestation, and to this I incline. This valley had proved very inauspicious to the Hebrews, on their former entrance into Canaan. They had been forced to turn their backs before the native inhabitants, and their hearts melted, and became as water (Josh. vii., vv. 5, 8, 12, 24, 36). But on their return from the captivity, the exiles would pass through it with the undisturbed expectation of a peaceable and joyful occupation of the country. —By "a door of hope" is meant a peaceful entrance into the Holy Land. —*She shall sing.*—The Sept., Syr., Arab., Grotius, and others take "Anetha" in the signification *to be humbled* or *afflicted*; but that of celebrating the Divine goodness in songs of gratitude better suits the connection.—*When she came up from the land of Egypt.*—As they then united in celebrating the goodness of the Lord displayed in their deliverance, so should the returning Israelites do, on again taking possession of their native land.

18.—The word "Baal" had originally been used in its unexceptionable acceptation of *husband*, and is thus applied to God (Isai. liv., v. 5); but as it had become common in its application by the Israelites to the heathen deities which they had worshipped, and besides, conveyed the idea of *fear*, *apprehension*, and *rule*, rather than that of *love* and *affection*, God here declares that in future he would be called "Ish," the name more usually employed to express the relation of husband, and which was not liable to the same objections.

19.—*The Baals.*—The different images of Baal worshipped by the Israelites.—*They shall no more be mentioned.*—The images shall no more be mentioned as being the deities of Israel. RASHI.

20. And in that day, I will make for them
A covenant with the beasts of the field,
And with the fowls of the air,
And with the reptiles of the ground;
And the bow, and the sword, and war,
Will I destroy out of the land;
And I will cause them to lie down safely.
21. And I will betroth thee unto me for ever;
Yea, I will betroth thee to me with righteousness and justice,
And with loving-kindness, and with mercy;
22. I will even betroth thee unto me with faithfulness;
And thou shalt know the Lord.

20.—*A Covenant.*—Such should be the security of the returned exiles, under the immediate care and protection of God, that everything capable of injuring them should be rendered perfectly harmless. The irrational animals should be restrained, as if under the bond of an inviolable compact; and the Assyrian armies should no more attack them.—*To lie down.*—"Shachab" is here expressive of the reclining posture in which the orientals indulge, whenever they are released from active exertion. At the time predicted, there would be no enemy or danger to break in upon their repose.

21.—*I will betroth thee.*—"Aras" signifies to contract a matrimonial alliance, and is here specially selected, in order to impress the minds of the Israelites with a sense of the distinguished character of the Divine benignity. Though they had rendered themselves totally unworthy of His regard, He declares that He would treat them as if they had never apostatised to idolatry. He would form a new conjugal relation, as with a female in her virgin state. The *triple* repetition of the verb expresses intensity of desire, and gives the strongest assurance to the party to which the promise is made. The several particulars here enumerated further discover, by the amplification which they form, the great kindness of God to His people. By "righteousness" and "justice" is meant every equitable obligation which God could be expected to place Himself under in the new conjugal relation—all that the Israelites could possibly expect in the way of supply from their Divine protector. To these, however, are added "loving-kindness" and "mercy," which express the strong internal affection from which the former should proceed, and the high degree of interest which God would take in His people.

22.—*With faithfulness.*—To remove every doubt from their minds, He crowns the whole by a gracious assurance, that His engagements should be faithfully performed.—*Thou shalt know the Lord.*—And there shall be no more *infidelity* on *thy part*, nor *divorce* upon *mine*. The Vulgate, two editions, and twenty-six MSS. read:—And thou shalt know *that I am the Lord.*

23. And it shall be in that day,
I will respond, saith the Lord,
I will respond to the heavens,
And they shall respond to the earth;
24. And the earth shall respond to the corn,
And the wine, and the oil;
And they shall respond to Jezreel.
25. For I will sow her for myself in the land;
And I will have mercy on Lo-Ruchamah;
And will say to Lo-Ammi: "Thou art my people;"
And they shall say: "Thou art my God."

23.—*I will respond.*—The sentence is repeated, to show how fully the thing was determined by the Almighty, and how implicitly they might depend on the Divine promise.—*I will respond to the heavens.*—The atmosphere, where vapours are collected. The *clouds*, when they wish to deposit their fertilising showers upon the earth.—*Respond to the earth.*—When it seems to supplicate for rain.

24.—*Respond to the Corn—Wine—Oil.*—When they seem to express a desire to supply the wants of man.—*Respond to Jezreel.*—The destitute people, who are in want of the necessaries of life. This is one of the most beautiful instances of prosopopœia to be found in Scripture, and may be considered thus:—

Jezreel, or the *Israelites*, are here considered as perishing for want of food. All inanimate nature is represented as invoking God on their behalf.

The *heavens* have prayed that they may be stored with *clouds*, so that they may drop down fatness upon the *earth*.

The Lord answers the heavens and *clouds* are formed.

The *earth* invokes the clouds, that they may drop down their fatness into its bosom. A gracious rain accordingly falls down to refresh the parched fields.

Then the *corn*, *vine*, and *olive*, implore the *earth* to put forth its vegetative energy.

The *earth* answers; and *corn*, *wine*, and *oil* are produced.

Jezreel cries for the necessaries of life, and all his wants are supplied out of the abundance of God. All these blessings are dependent one upon another, as the links are which constitute a chain; and God has the government of the whole; and He manages all for the benefit of man. How gracious is this God!

25.—*For I will.*—The "vau" is causal, introducing a declaration which is designed to account for the appropriation of the name *Jezreel*, at the end of the preceding verse.—This verse is a repetition of what is promised, ch. ii., v. 1.

CHAPTER III.

1. Then said the Lord unto me: "Go again, love a
"woman beloved of her friend, yet an adulteress;
"like the love of the Lord toward the children of
"Israel, who turn to other Gods, and love flagons

1.—*Go again, love a woman.*—Here the symbolical representation is taken up again, and the same imagery is adopted. The elements of undeserved love on the one side, and ungrateful faithlessness on the other, are placed in a stronger light by some additional circumstances. Dr. Henderson says: "To me there appears no consistent method of explaining it but that which assumes an identity of the female here specified with *Gomer*, whom the Prophet had previously married. For, first, such construction is absolutely required by the analogy. It was Israel that stood in the relation of wife to God from first to last. No other nation was admitted to the same relation. Secondly, the female is one already married, but who had proved unfaithful, which was precisely the case with Israel. Thirdly, except she had been the Prophet's own wife, who has become unfaithful to him, there would be no point in comparing his love to her with that borne by God to idolatrous Israel. Fourthly, a command to love the wife of another man, who, notwithstanding her infidelity was still attached to her, would be totally repugnant to every idea of moral justice and propriety. Lastly, the command is not *take*, as in the former instance (ch. i., v. 2) the usual formula by which marriage is expressed, but *love*, *i.e.*, renew thy kindness to her; receive her back into thy house, and make kind provision for her." This is quite consistent with his view of the former passage (see note there). According to my opinion, the recurrence of the same imagery (as stated in ch. i.) binds us so little, that if we view the subsequent oracle (ch. iv.) as independent of ch. ii., and perhaps delivered some time after the former, we are at full liberty to drop the former scene with all its circumstances entirely, and to place ourselves in quite a new one, though parallel to the former. We shall thus also avoid some philological difficulties, with which Dr. Henderson has to struggle.—*Beloved of her friend.*—Sept.: "loving evil." Syr.: "An adulterous woman, who loveth evil things." This rendering requires a different punctuation.—*Like the love of the Lord.*—This woman, who had proved false to her husband, was still beloved by him, though he could not acknowledge her; as the Israelites were beloved by the Lord, while they were looking after other Gods.—*Who turn to other Gods.*—This, as well as the preceding sentence, form only two out of numerous instances in which Hoshea uses the language of the Pentateuch. See Hävernick's Handbuch der Histor.-Crit. Einleitung in das A. T. I Theil, II Abtheil, p. 608.—*Flagons of wine.*—Probably such as were used for libations, or drunk at idolatrous feasts. Henderson and others render "grape cakes," pressed cakes of dried grapes. Such cakes are highly esteemed in the East, on account of their sweet taste, and perhaps formed part of the offering presented to idols, and afterwards eaten at idolatrous

2. "of wine." So I bought her to me for fifteen pieces of silver, and for an homer and a half of
3. barley. And I said unto her: "Abide for "me many days; do not play the harlot, nor be "thou another man's; then will I also be thine."
4. For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, without a sacrifice, and without a statue, and without an

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feasts. This latter interpretation is supported by Targum Jonathan, (Exod. xvi., v. 31) who renders "Ashishin" for "tzapichis," *a flat cake.*

2.—*So I bought her to me.*—Purchase of wives was not uncommon, as it is still, in eastern countries. See Michaelis on the laws of Moses, Art. lxxxv.; Grant's Nestorians, p. 214; Perkins' Eight years in Persia, p. 236.—Henderson observes on this verse: "The fact, that the price here specified, one half in money, and the other half in grain, was the exact amount of what was allowed for a female slave (Exod. xxi., v. 32), induces the belief that the payment was made by the Prophet for the liberation of his own wife, who had become the property of the person with whom she had been living in adultery." I am, however, at a loss to understand how the legal wife of a free Hebrew could have become *the property* of another man! —The signification of *buying,* as attaching to "Karah," is sufficiently established by Deut. ii., v. 6. Hengstenberg's attempt to explain it here of *digging,* in the sense of boring the ear in token of slavery, is unsuccessful.—*Fifteen pieces of silver.*—If they were *shekels,* the price was about *two* pounds *five* shillings.—*An homer and a half of barley.*—About *thirteen* bushels.

3.—*Abide for me many days.*—She was to abide in his house without their having any intercourse.—*Then will I also be thine.*—Kimchi and Aben Ezra: "Neither will I come unto thee." There is no necessity for such an interpretation.

4.—*Shall abide many days without a king.*—Kimchi: "These are the days of our present captivity; for we have neither king nor prince of Israel, but are under the rule of the nations, even under the rule of their kings and their princes."—*Without a sacrifice.*—To God. —*Without a statue.*—Without an image for idolatrous worship. KIMCHI.—*Ephod.*—The *ephod* was that part of the high priest's dress which was worn above the tunic and robe. It consisted of two pieces which hung down, the one in front over the breast, and the other covering the back, and both reaching to the middle of the thigh. They were joined together on the shoulders by golden clasps, set in precious stones, and fastened round the waist by a girdle. In the breast part was the "Choshen," or pectoral, containing the Urim and Thummim, by which divine responses were vouchsafed to the Hebrews.—*Teraphim.*—Penates or household gods. They were used at a very early period, as appears from the history of Rachel (Gen.

5. Ephod, and without Teraphim. But afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king; and shall approach reverently the Lord and His goodness in the latter days.

CHAPTER IV.

1. Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel!
For the Lord hath a controversy
With the inhabitants of the land;
Because there is no truth, nor mercy,
Nor knowledge of God in the land.
2. There is nothing but swearing, and lying, and killing,
And stealing, and committing adultery;
They are licentious;
And blood toucheth blood!

xxxi., vv. 19, 30, 32, 34, and 35). Comp. I Sam. xix., v. 13; II Kings xxiii, v. 24. That they were not only kept as tutelary deities, but also consulted for the purpose of obtaining a knowledge of future events, appears from the passages just quoted.

5.—*And David their king.*—They shall no more say: "What portion have we in David?" See I Kings xii., v. 16.

1.—*Hear.*—The initiatory words are those of Hoshea, summoning attention to the Divine message which he was commissioned to deliver. —*A controversy.*—"Rib," what we should call a *lawsuit*, in which God is *plaintiff*, and the Israelites *defendants*.

2.—*There is nothing but swearing.*—The wickedness which abounded is first set forth negatively, and then positively, under certain items; and the infinitive absolute is employed with great effect, as expressing more emphatically, by its abstract form, the heinousness of the evils described. The force of this I have given in a free translation.—Where there is *no truth*, there will be *lies and perjury*; for false swearing is brought in to confirm lying statements. And when there is *no mercy*, *murders* will be frequent. And where there is *no knowledge of God*, no conviction of His *omnipresence* and *omniscience*, private offences, such as *stealing* and *adulteries* will prevail. —*They are licentious.*—So Fuerstenthal. Ewald improperly limits the signification of the verb "paratz" in this place to the act of *breaking into* houses. The metaphor seems rather to be taken from the bursting forth of a torrent, which, in its progress, spreads wider and wider. The paraphrase of the Targum: "They beget children by their neighbour's wives."—*And blood toucheth blood.*—Murders are committed perpetually. The plural form of "damim," has also a degree of emphasis, signifying much bloodshed. See II Kings xv.; Micah vii., v. 2.

3. Therefore shall the land mourn,
And every one dwelling in it shall languish,
With the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the air;
Yea, the fishes of the sea shall be taken away.
4. Yet no one contendeth, no one reproveth!....
For thy people are like those that contend with the priest!
5. Therefore thou shalt fall by day,
And the Prophet also shall fall with thee by night,
And I will cut off thy mother.

3.—*Mourn.*—Fruitful seasons shall be denied.—*Shall languish.*—*Endemic* and *epidemic* disorders shall prevail, and multitudes shall die.—*With the beasts—fowls.*—There shall be a death of cattle and domestic animals, in consequence of the badness of the season.

4.—*Yet no one contendeth.*—There is no one to be found among them who should reprove them to forsake their evil ways, and to show them the course they should follow. Dr. Henderson contends, yet without sufficient grounds, that "al" is here prohibitory.—*For thy people.*—This is one of the most difficult passages in this Book, and translators and commentators differ greatly. Boothroyd: "For *my* (as the Sept. and Arab.) people are as the priest that contendeth with me." So also Houbigant. Bishop Newcome: "And as is the provocation of the priest, so is that of my people." Dr. Henderson says: "All reproof on the part of their friends or neighbours generally would prove fruitless, seeing they had reached a degree of hardihood, which was only equalled by the contumacy of those who refused to obey the priest, when he gave judgment in the name of the Lord." (Deut. xvi., v. 12.) I rather agree with Dr. Adam Clarke, who comments on this passage: "The *people* and the *priest* are alike rebels against the Lord; the priests having become idolaters as well as the people." Compare verse 9.—But a great difficulty will be removed, if we accept the reading of some Hebrew MSS., who omit the word, "Cohen;" and then the text may be read: "And thy people are as rebels."

5.—*Therefore.*—By a sudden transition to the second person, the Prophet addresses himself directly to his guilty people, and predicts their destruction.—*By day.*—In the most open and public manner. Kimchi, Grotius, and Ewald improperly render "to-day." As contrasted here with "night," it is equivalent to "bayom," *by day*; compare Nehem. iv., v. 16.—*The prophet.*—The *false* prophet, when employed in taking prognostications from stars, meteors, etc.—*By night.*—That the *article* is not repeated before "lay'lah," may be owing to the common adverbial use of this noun without it. The false prophets by whom the Israelites had been encouraged in wicked practices, should render them no assistance in the seasons of calamity, but should be themselves involved in the same common ruin.—*Thy mother.*—The Israelitish state, of which the citizens were the children.

6. My people are cut off for lack of knowledge;
Because thou hast rejected knowledge,
I will also reject thee from ministering unto me;
Because thou hast forgotten the law of thy God,
I will also forget thy children.
7. As they increased, so they sinned against me;
Therefore will I change their glory into shame.
8. They eat the sin-offerings of my people,
And long for their iniquity.
9. Therefore it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest;
And I will punish them for their ways,
And reward them for their doings.

Thus Kimchi, Jerome, Grotius, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Maurer, and Fuerstenshal. Others suppose the metropolis to be intended. Boothroyd: "thy mother-city;" viz., Samaria.

6.—*Because thou hast rejected knowledge.*—The priest, who taught the people to combine with His worship that of the pagan deities, or that of the golden calves, which, no doubt, paved the way for the universal spread of idolatry in Israel.—*Thou hast forgotten the law of thy God.*—The priests were charged with teaching the law. See Deut. xxxiii., v. 6. See also Kimchi.

7.—*As they increased.*—As the word for *priests* is obviously the nominative to the verbs in the three following verses, and the priests are the subject of discourse in that which precedes, they must likewise be the persons spoken of in this. In proportion as they multiplied in numbers, and grew in influence, they promoted the increase of idolatry. According to the Midrash (Deut. i.), the Targum, and Michaelis it refers not to increase in *numbers* but in *wealth*. Fuerstenthal renders: "As many as there are of them, so many have sinned against me;" a not unhappy rendering, which the original will admit.

8.—*The sin-offerings—and long for their iniquity.*—The priests greedily devoured what the people brought for the expiation of their sins; and instead of endeavouring to put a stop to abounding iniquity, only wished it to increase, in order that they might profit by the multitude of the victims presented for sacrifice.—Several Hebrew MSS., the Sept., Syr., Targum, Vulg., and Arab. read: "Naphshom;" though in the Holy Scriptures not unfrequently a proposition commences with the *plural*, and ends with the *singular*, and *vice versa*.

9.—*As with the people so with the priest.*—The rank and wealth of the priests would not exempt them from sharing the same fate with the rest of the nation.

10. They shall eat, and not be satisfied;
They shall play the harlot, but not increase;
For they have ceased to regard the Lord.

11. Harlotry, and wine, and new wine,
Have taken away their understanding.
12. My people consult with their wood,
And their staff shall give them advice;
For the spirit of harlotry hath caused them to err,
And they have gone astray from their God.

10.—*They shall eat.*—Whatever means they may use to *satisfy* or *gratify* themselves, shall be ineffectual.

11.—Saadia, Arnold (Blumen althebrais. Dichtkunst) and Horsley, disjoin "lishmor" from the preceding verse, and connect it with the following nouns. thus:

10. "They have forsaken the Lord,
11. Giving heed to fornication," etc.

But, notwithstanding the apparent force of the Bishop's remarks, there is something so repugnant in the Hebrew usage in the combination *to observe fornication, and wine, and new wine,* that it is altogether inadmissible. This verse has the appearance of a moral adage. The influence of habits of impurity and intoxication in blunting the moral feelings, and weakening the intellectual powers, is a well-established fact in the history or man. There can be little doubt that the Prophet has specially in view the impure and bacchanalian orgies which were connected with the Syrian idolatry.

12.—*Staff.*—A term of contempt and derision, applied to idols, which were often of wood.—The allusion is, however, more usually applied to a species of divination by means of rods or staves, which was much in use among the ancient heathen, called Rhabdomancy. There are notices of various practices of this description, to more than one of which the Prophet may possibly allude. Theophylact illustrates this text, by noticing a very common practice, to which he supposes it may allude. The diviners set up rods, and began to mutter verses and enchantments, and when the rods fell, they drew their presages from the manner and direction of the fall. The Hebrew writers, however, thus describe the custom which they suppose to be intended. When a person began a journey, or commenced any other undertaking, he desired to know whether the result would be prosperous or otherwise; and to this end he took a branch of a tree, or rod, and stripped off the bark on one side and left it on the other. He then threw up the rod twice, and if the side with the bark lay upwards the first time, and the peeled side the second time, the omen was good, and he proceeded in his undertaking; but if the reverse happened, the sign was bad, and the matter in hand was for the time discontinued. If either of the sides appeared uppermost at *both* throws, the sign was neither good nor evil, and the man decided as

13. Upon the tops of the mountains they sacrifice,
And upon the hills they burn incense,
Under oak, and poplar, and terebinth,
Because their shade is good;
Wherefore your daughters play the harlot,
And your daughters-in-law commit adultery.
14. Shall not I punish your daughters
When they play the harlot,

he judged best. Another way was for a man to take a rod, and measure its length by spans, or by the length of his finger, saying each time: "*I will go; I will not go;*" or, "*I will do; I will forbear,*" alternately, and he decided according to the alternative which was associated with the last span or finger's measure. The method of divination by rods, as in use among the ancient Germans, and described by Tacitus (de Moribus German. c. x.), was not much unlike one of the modes of divination by arrows. They cut a twig of a fruit tree into several pieces, and, having distinguished the pieces by marks, threw them promiscuously into a white cloth. Then the priest of the community—if information was desired concerning a public event, or, if a private one, the father of a family—addressed a prayer to the gods, and looking towards heaven, took up each piece thrice, one after another, and, from the order in which the marks presented themselves, he drew inferences for the solution of the difficulty or for the prediction of the future.—Herodotus also (Melp. lxvii.), describes the original and common divination of the Scythians as by rods; but the application of the details given by him are not very clear.—More on the subject may be found in Jamblichus: "On the mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Assyrians."—(Taylor's Translation).—*Spirit of harlotry.*—A powerful impetus to commit acts of idolatry. The Talmud, several Hebrew MSS., Syr., Vulg., and Targum, read: "hith'am," undoubtedly the true reading.

13.—*Upon the tops of the mountains.*—Mountains and hills were selected by idolaters on which to erect their altars, and offer their sacrifices, on account of their supposed proximity to the host of heaven, which they worshipped. That this custom was very ancient, appears from the prohibition, Deut. xii., v. 2. For imitating it, the Hebrews are frequently reproved, Isa. lxv., v. 7; Jer. iii., v. 6; Ezek. xviii., v. 11.—*They sacrifice.*—The original being in *piel*, it expresses the eagerness and frequency with which the Israelites offered their idolatrous sacrifices.—*Because their shade is good.*—They selected groves of oak, poplar, etc., for the purpose of superstition and idolatry, under whose umbrageous cover they might at once be screened from the heat of the sun, and indulge in lascivious practices. The sacrifice of female virtue, which was required in the religious service of the Phœnician goddess Astarte, seems clearly to be referred to in this and the following verse.

14.—*Shall I not punish.*—I have followed Houbigant, Boothroyd, Fuerstenthal, and others. It is scarcely possible for the Prophet to

And your daughters-in-law,
When they commit adultery?
Because they themselves go aside with harlots,
And sacrifice with prostitutes?.....
Therefore the people that understand not falleth headlong.

15. Though thou play the harlot, O Israel!
Yet let not Judah become guilty;
Come ye not to Gilgal,
Neither go ye up to Beth-aven,
Nor swear: "As God liveth."

say that these women who sacrificed their virtue to the service of idols, should be held guiltless, because their husbands rioted in the same wickedness.—The transition from the second to the third person, for the purpose of more graphically exhibiting the subject of discourse, is not without example. The use of the separate pronoun "hem" also adds to the emphasis of the language.—*Go aside.*—The original is in *Piel,* strongly marking the studied withdrawal of the Israelites from the assembled throngs. "Zonoth" were ordinary females, who prostituted themselves for gain, whilst "k'deshoth" were those who devoted themselves to the service of Astarte, by offering their persons to be violated in her temples at the sacred festivals.—*Falleth headlong.*—The Hebrew verb occurs only here, and Prov. x., vv. 8, 10, where see Schultens.

15.—The Prophet turns his mind to Judah, where more regard was yet paid to the law, and she is exhorted to maintain her integrity. —*Gilgal.*—A town situated between the Jordan and Jericho, near the confines of the kingdom of Samaria. Here was the place where the covenant of circumcision was renewed, when the people passed over Jordan (Joshua v.); sacrifices were offered there to God in the days of Samuel (I Sam. x., vv. 8, 13; xv., vv. 21, 33); but it was rendered infamous by the worship of idols, after Jeroboam had set up his calves.—*Beth-Aven.—The house of iniquity,* a name given by the minor prophets, by way of contempt to *Beth-el, i.e., the house of God,* a place sacred to true religion in the time of the patriarchs, and the judges; but afterwards selected by Jeroboam as the principal seat of the worship of the golden calves (I Kings xii., vv. 29, 32, 33; xiii., v. 1). It originally belonged to the tribe of Benjamin, but was taken by that of Ephraim (Judges i., vv. 22, 25). That there was a city of the name of *Beth-aven,* near to Bethel, appears from Josh. vii., v. 2, which may have suggested the appropriation of the name of the latter.—*As God liveth.*—Whenever they intended to swear false, they swore by the name of *God,* but when they intended to swear to the truth, they swore by the name of *Baal*; he therefore warns Judah not to swear "As God liveth;" which was used in Israel for a false oath.

16. For Israel slideth back as a backsliding heifer ;
Shall now the Lord feed them
As a lamb in a wide place ?
17. Ephraim is joined to idols ;
Let him alone.
18. Their drink is loathsome ;
They commit adultery continually ;
Even their rulers desired it ;
Even they loved the shame.
19. The wind hath bound her up in its wings ;
And they will be ashamed of their sacrifices.

16.—*Israel slideth back.*—The metaphor is here taken from a heifer that obstinately refuses to be yoked.—I have followed Fuerstenthal. If, however, we adopt the rendering of the A. V., it must be understood ironically.

17.—*Ephraim.*—Ephraim, as the most numerous and powerful of the ten tribes, and that in which the kingdom was established, is put for all the *ten.*—*Joined.*—By voluntary choice. The Israelites addicted themselves to the service of idols, and thus identified themselves with their interests.—While the word "Atzabim," *idols,* suggests the idea of their being the fabrication of human labour, it also intimates the pain and sorrow resulting from idolatry. The *root* hath both significations.—*Let him alone.*—They are irreclaimably devoted to the idols : let them take their own way, and reap the consequences of their perverse choice. Their case is desperate. Thus Tanchum, Rashi, Kimchi, Calvin, Tarnovius, Coverdale, Pococke, Kuinoel, Michaelis, Newcome, Adam Clarke, Ewald, and others.—The Targum, Jerome, Mercer, Grotius, Rosenmüller, Fuerstenthal, and others, regard the words as simply containing a warning to the inhabitants of Judah to keep aloof from, and take no part in, the idolatries of the Ephraimites. I am inclined to the latter opinion, which is more in accordance with the preceding 15th verse.

18.—Dr. Henderson proposes to add the particle "im," *when,* and renders : "When the carousal is over they indulge in lewdness ;" and comments on this passage : "No sooner were their compotations over, than they indulged in excessive lewdness ; for the acceptation *past, passed away, over,* for 'sar' comp. I Sam. xv., v. 32." There is something plausible in his rendering, though Horsley, Ewald, and others, are of opinion that "sar" means *vapid, degenerated, sour,* etc. I have followed Fuerstenthal.—*Even their rulers.*—The rendering of Aben Ezra and Kimchi, and adopted by the translators of the A. V., is not suitable to the connection.—"Maginnim," *shields,* are tropically used for *princes, rulers,* as the natural protectors of the people, here and Ps. xlvii., v. 10.

19.—*The wind.*—By an expressive figure borrowed from the sudden force with which anything is carried off by the wind, the

CHAPTER V.

1. Hear ye this, O priests !
   And hearken ye, O house of Israel !
   Do ye also give ear, O house of the king !
   Ye who should exercise judgment.
   Verily, ye were a snare on Mizpah,
   And a net spread out upon Tabor.
2. And the revolters slaughter to excess ;
   But will I chastise them all.

Prophet announces the suddenness and violence with which the ten tribes should be removed from their land. "Ruach," being of both genders, accounts for the *masculine* of the verb, and the feminine pronoun suffix.—*And they will be ashamed.*—In the distant countries of the Medes, by whom all image worship was held in abomination, the exiles would be brought to a sense of the wickedness and absurdity of their conduct.—*Of their sacrifices.*—Sacrifices are here put by synechdoche for the whole system of idolatry in which they indulged.—The Targum and Syr. read : "of their *altars*," and is adopted by Newcome.

1.—*O house of Israel.*—The Sanhedrim. ABEN EZRA.—*House of the king.*—The king and his court. From the references made to the idolatry and punishment of Judah in this and the following chapter, it would appear that the king whom Hoshea had specifically in view was Pekah, the son of Remaliah ; since it was in the reign of Ahaz, who was contemporary with him, that idol worship was carried to such a height in that kingdom as to call for the calamities inflicted upon it by the confederate forces of Israel and Syria, as well as by the king of Assyria.—*Ye who should exercise judgment.*—So the Targum, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Abarbanel, Pagninus, Junius, Tremellius, Fuerstenthal, and others. Rashi and most Christian expositors follow the A. V., viz. : that judgment or punishment was directed against them. They had merited it, and it was now coming upon them.—*Mizpah.*—As there were several places of this name, some degree of uncertainty attaches to it as occurring here ; but as the object of the prophet seems to be to set forth the means employed for seducing the whole of the ten tribes to idolatry, it is more probable that he had in his eye "Mizpah" of Gilead, on the east of Jordan, just as he specifies Mount Tabor to the west of that river. See Judges x., v. 17 ; xi., v. 29. On both of these elevated positions false worship had been established for the purpose of ensnaring the inhabitants of the adjacent regions. The means employed to bring them over to it are compared to the snares and nets used for catching birds and wild beasts upon the mountains. By metonymy, the leaders of the people are spoken of as such nets and snares, because of their bad example, and the influence which they otherwise exerted for evil.

2.—*The apostates.*—"Setim" *apostates*, the Benoni participle of "Sut," *to turn aside*, apostatise.—*Slaughter.*—"Shachata,"

3. I know Ephraim,
And Israel is not hid from me;
Even now thou committest adultery, O Ephraim!
Israel is defiled!
4. Their deeds will not suffer them
To turn to their God;
For the spirit of harlotries is within them,
And they acknowledge not the Lord.

slaughtering, the infinitive absolute, with "he" cohartative, of "Shachat" *to kill*, for food or sacrifice. Here, from its close connection with the preceding verse, it has the latter signification. Some think *murder* is meant, but this is less likely; though the verb is also used in this sense in other places.—*To excess.*—Hebrew literally: "*They deepen* to slaughter," *i.e.*, by a peculiar idiom: "they slaughter to excess," kill an immense number of sacrificial victims. There is some difficulty in this verse, and translators, both Jewish and Christian, differ. Castell, followed by Houbigant: "The revolters have made deep their corruption." Gesenius: "In slaying (of sacrifices) they sin greatly;" and understands that the allusion is to human sacrifices. It may be observed, that the *snare* on Mizpah, and the *net* on Tabor, may allude to their being used as "high places" for idolatrous worship, which was often signalized by the sacrifice of human beings. Bishop Horsley thinks that the figure is continued in the present verse, and translates "prickers," instead of "revolters;" and explains in his note, that the "prickers" were scouts that waited on horseback, attendants on the chase, whose business it was to scour the country all round, and drive the wild beasts into the toils.—*But I will chastise.*—The idolatrous Israelites multiplied their sacrifices in order that they might enjoy prosperity under the protection of the deities to whom they offered them; but God here declares that none of them should escape the punishment which He was about to inflict upon them.

3.—*I know Ephraim.*—Ephraim, as distinguished from *Israel*, means the tribe of Ephraim, from which most of the apostate kings sprang. By *Israel* the other *nine* tribes are meant. As having incurred the more aggravated guilt, the former is here addressed in the *second* person. Aben Ezra says that *Ephraim* refers to the tribe of *Judah*. That he is mistaken, the following 5th verse clearly proves. —*Israel is defiled.*—The polluting influence of the Ephraimites was felt through the whole nation.—*Even now.*—This is not without emphasis; pointing out the undeniable fact that they had been the cause of the spread of idolatry.

4.—*Their deeds will not suffer them.*—The language now changes to the plural, to express the character of the people generally. I have followed Aben Ezra, Rashi, Horsley, Manger, Kuinoel, Maurer, Boothroyd, Fuerstenthal, and Ewald. Tanchum, Leo Juda, Mercer, Tarnovius, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Noyes, Hitzig, and Henderson render: "They frame not their deeds," the meaning of which is,

5. And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face;
Therefore Israel and Ephraim shall fall through their iniquity—
Even Judah shall fall with them!
6. With their flocks, and with their herds,
They may go to seek the Lord,
But they shall not find Him;
He hath withdrawn himself from them!

that the Israelites did not reform, did not so regard their wicked practices, as to abandon them and return to the pure worship of God. Both renderings are admissible, though I prefer the former.

5.—*Testifieth.*—A judicial phrase, and refers to the testimony given by a witness *for* or *against* another, according to circumstances. Compare Gen. xxx., v. 33. The rendering *to be humbled*, which is that of the Sept., Syr., Targum, Rashi, Michaelis, Newcome, Noyes, Maurer, and Fuerstenthal, cannot be philologically sustained. The addition: "to his face," gives emphasis to the phrase, *openly, publicly*, in such a manner that he himself may see it, without the adduction of further evidence. That "geon" signifies *pride, insolence*, notwithstanding what Horsley asserts to the contrary, is sufficiently apparent from Prov. xvi., v. 18, and Isa. xvi., v. 6. I should rather think, however, that by the term as here used, we are to understand the *objects* of which the ten tribes were proud, viz., their splendid and magnificent idols. As *God* is spoken of as the *pride of Jacob*, "Geon Ja'kob," (Amos viii., v. 7), so the *idols* might have been called here "the pride of Israel." They glorified in them as the objects of their confidence and attachment. These very gods, by their utter impotence, bare open witness that they could afford no help to those who trusted in them; so that their worshippers could not but have been convinced of their folly, if their hearts had not become morally obscured by the practice of iniquity. The words are repeated with a similar reference, ch. vii., v. 10.——

The concluding line of this verse contains an abrupt and unexpected application of the threatening to Judah. As they had suffered themselves to be influenced by the example of Israel, they should also share in their punishment. The respective captivities of both are here threatened. On comparing this threatening with ch. iv., v. 15, it appears to have been delivered at a period considerably subsequent to that which is there spoken of, when the evils of idolatry had made some progress in the southern kingdom.

6.—The idolaters are here told that though in the hour of calamity they might bring their flocks and herds as propitiatory sacrifices to God, in order to avert the punishment, it would be altogether in vain.—*He has withdrawn.*—Pococke's Arab. MS. has: "He has withdrawn *his help* from them." Israel and Judah could no longer reckon on the Divine presence, and the effectual aid which that presence implied.

7. They have dealt treacherously in regard to the Lord:
For they have begotten strange children;
Now shall a month devour them with their portion.....

8. Blow ye the horn in Gibeah, the trumpet in Ramah;
Sound an alarm in Beth-aven;
He is behind thee, O Benjamin!

7.—*Dealt treacherously.*—The verb "Bagad" is also used of the breach of the matrimonial Covenant (Jer. iii., v. 20). This idea is expressed in the Arab. MS. of Pococke, which reads: "They have broken the Covenant of God."—*Strange children.*—The Hebrew word "Zarim" *strange, foreign,* is here selected, in order to show that the idolatry was the result of intercourse with foreigners.—*Now.*—This is here to be taken, *not* as determining the exact point of present time, but the *speedy* and *certain* arrival of the event.—*A month.*—This term has perplexed nearly all interpreters. Houbigant at once cuts the knot by an arbitrary emendation, which is also adopted by Boothroyd. He proposes to read "chasil," *a locust*; but this word has no affinity with "chodesh." The MSS. of Kennicott and De Rossi show no various reading. Michaelis, Dathe, Kuinoel, and Stäudlin give to the Hebrew the signification of the Arab., *new and unexpected,* and explain it of a sudden calamity. Rashi explains it as referring to the (5th) month "Ab," in which month both temples were destroyed. Kimchi says it means in *a short time.* Others take it in the sense of *new moon, i.e.,* either at the feast of the new moon, when the Israelites were assembled to worship; or, at that time their calamities should commence. We may as well abide by the usual meaning of the term, and consider the Prophet as announcing, that within the space of one month they should be visited with merited punishment. The calamity predicted seems to have been that occasioned by the invasion of Tiglathpileser, who ravaged the country, and carried into captivity the tribes of Reuben, Gad, the half-tribe of Manasseh, and that of Naphtali, besides the inhabitants of several cities in other parts of the country (II Kings, xv., v. 29; I Chron. v., v. 26). That Judah also suffered on this occasion, see II Chron. xxviii., vv. 19-21. — *Their portion.*—Their possessions or property. Henderson thinks that the Prophet has in view their *idols,* whom they regarded as the authors of their possessions and enjoyments.

8.—*Blow the trumpet.*—An alarm is ordered to be given to the southern kingdom of the approach of the enemy. This verse intimately coheres with the foregoing, and is not to be taken for the commencement of a new prophecy, as Jerome, Abarbanel, Michaelis, Dathe, and others suppose. The difference between the "Shophar" and the "Chazozrah" seems to be, that the former was the same as the "keren," *horn,* being made of the curved horn of animals (Joshua vi., vv. 5, 6, 8); whereas the latter was made of metal, such as the two silver trumpets which were employed for convoking the congregation (Numb. x., v. 2).—*Gibeah—Ramah.*—Not as the Sept., *heights* and

9. Ephraim shall be desolate
In the day of rebuke:
Among the tribes of Israel
Have I made known a sure event.
10. The princes of Judah have become
Like those that remove the land-mark;
I will pour out my wrath upon them like water.
11. Ephraim is oppressed,
He is crushed in judgment;
Because he consented,
He followed the order.

elevated places in general, but proper names. Both lay in the tribe of Benjamin, as did also Beth-el, here called *Beth-aven*. Kimchi, however, contends that the *Beth-aven* here mentioned lay in the tribe of Ephraim. I dissent from him, for reason that as the two places mentioned here lay in *Benjamin*, the *third* mentioned by the Prophet lay no doubt in the same tribe.—*He is behind thee.*—An abrupt call of warning. "Benjamin! fly for life! The enemy is just behind thee!"——

9.—*Ephraim.*—The ten tribes. Having apprised Judah of the danger with which they were threatened, the Prophet returns to describe the calamity which was to be inflicted upon the *ten* tribes; and in the course of the following verses directs his discourse to the two kingdoms alternately.—*Among the tribes of Israel.*—They have got sufficient warning; it is their own fault that they have not taken it. From this part of the verse it would seem that the ten tribes were the scene of the Prophet's ministry.——

10.—*The princes of Judah.*—Probably king Ahaz and his courtiers are intended.—*Like those that remove the land-mark.*—They have leaped over law's enclosure, and scaled all the walls of right; they have despised and broken all laws, human and divine.—*Pour out my wrath.*—Divine judgments are frequently compared to the overflowing of water from a river. *To pour out*, expresses the fulness of their infliction.——

11.—*Crushed in judgment.*—The genitive of cause, *broken in pieces* by the judgment, or punishment inflicted. Fuerstenthal renders: "Ephraim is oppressed—justly oppressed."—*He followed the order.*—Not any divine commandment, but the order issued by Jeroboam to worship the golden calves (I Kings xii., vv. 28, 33). Such an order his subjects were bound by higher authority to have resisted; but they readily complied with it, and thus became prepared to indulge in all the gross idolatries to which this worship proved the introduction. The Sept. seem to have read "Shav;" but it is more likely they intended to give the sense of the whole, rather than the signification of this particular word. They are followed by the Syriac version, and partly by the Targum. Jerome, on the other hand, renders *sordes*, regarding it as a contracted form of "Tzoah," filthiness.——

12. Therefore will I be as a moth to Ephraim,
And as rottenness to the house of Judah.
13. When Ephraim saw his sickness,
And Judah his wound,
Then Ephraim went to Assyria,
And [Judah] sent to king Jareb;
But he could not heal you,
Nor cure you of your wound.
14. For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion,
And as a young lion to the house of Judah;
I, even I, will tear and depart;
I will carry away and none shall deliver.
15. I will depart, and return to my place,
Till they own their guilt,

12.—*As a moth.*—Consume them by degrees, as a moth frets a garment.—*Rottenness.*—Of wood.—See Job xiii., v. 28, where both words occur together as here.——

13.—*When Ephraim saw.*—The verb "Raah" *to see*, has here the sense of *feeling, experiencing*, as in the phrases *to see life, death, good, evil*, etc. When both Israel and Judah felt their own weakness to resist their enemies, instead of calling upon, and trusting in Me, they sought sinful alliances, and trusted in their idols.—*And Judah.*—This must be supplied. See Rashi.—*King Jareb.*—This name occurs nowhere in Scripture but here and in ch. x., v. 6. The Vulg. and Targum render: "an avenger;" a person whom they thought able to save them from their enemies. That the *King of Assyria* is meant here, there can be no doubt. See ch. x., v. 6. He was ever ready to mix himself up with the affairs of neighbouring states, in order to extend or consolidate his gigantic empire, and was justly regarded by the Hebrews as their most powerful adversary. The application made by the northern kingdom was that which took place in the reign of Menahem, when that monarch sent to Pul a thousand talents of silver for the purpose of engaging him on his behalf (II Kings xv., v. 19). But the alliance proved of no real value, for the subsidy was raised by oppression, and, in the course of the following reign, Tiglathpileser invaded and depopulated a great part of the country. The embassy from the kingdom of Judah was that sent by Ahaz to Tiglathpileser, when attacked by the united kings of Syria and Israel (II Kings xvi., vv. 7, 8; II Chron. xxviii., v. 21).

14.—*For I will be.*—No effort to recover a state of prosperity, while the anger of God was excited against them, could possibly succeed.—*I, even I.*—The reduplication is, as usual, emphatic.—*Tear—carry away.*—The prey. Rashi.

15.—*I will depart.*—As God's coming to a people, and being with them, implies their experiencing efficient protection and aid, so His withdrawment of His presence implies the deprivation of these

And seek my face;
In their affliction they will seek me [saying]:
VI. 1. "Come, let us return unto the Lord;
"For He hath torn, but He will heal us;
"He hath smitten, but He will bind us up.
2. "After two days He will restore us to life;
"On the third day He will raise us up,
"And we shall live before Him.

blessings.—*And seek my face.*—Strive to obtain my favour. The phrase occurs frequently in the Psalms, in reference to application to God in prayer.——

1.—*Come let us return.*—It has been disputed whether these words be those of the Prophet exhorting his countrymen to repent, and turn to God, or whether they are to be regarded as employed by themselves to give expression to their feelings of penitence, their confidence in God for deliverance from punishment, and their resolutions of amendment for the future. The latter appears to be the preferable interpretation. The intimate connection of the words with the preceding context, and the repetition, in part, of its language, induces to the conclusion that the same subject is here continued, viz., the castigation of the Hebrew kingdoms on account of idolatry, and the effect produced by it. This connection the ancient versions have endeavoured to establish, by inserting a word corresponding to "lemor;" though it is not found in any Hebrew MS.—*He hath torn.* —See ch. v., v. 14. They acknowledge that their distresses came from His hand, as the punishment for their offences. But, while they acknowledge the *justice* of God, they depend on His well known mercy and compassion for restoration to life and health.

2.—*After two days.*—A proverbial way of describing an event which would soon happen. *Two* is put for *a few*, I Kings xvii., v. 12. *One* and *two* for *a few*, Isa. vii., v. 21; Jer. iii., v. 14. *Two* or *three* for a few, Isa. xvii., v. 6. The exegesis of Grotius, Horsley, Clarke, and others, who regard this verse as referring to the resurrection of the founder of the Christian faith is groundless. The simple meaning of the passage is, that on their conversion from the service of *idols* to that of *God*, the Hebrews should experience the removal of the national calamities with which they had been visited; the nation which had been reduced to a state of *political death* would be resusciated, and enjoy a renewal of its former prosperity. From the metaphor of disease, verse 1, there is, in verse 2, an advance to that of actual death, and a consequent resurrection, in order to place their present, and also their anticipated condition, in a more striking light. For the use of the latter metaphor, in application to the national affairs of the Jews, see Isa. xxvi., v. 19; Ezek. xxxvii., vv. 1-14. —*On the third day.*—The afflicted Hebrews confidently hoped that their punishment would be of brief duration, and that God would assuredly restore them to the enjoyment of his favour. This enjoy-

3. "Then shall we know, and strive to know the Lord:
"Like the dawn, His going forth is fixed;
"Yea, He will come to us like the rain,
"Like the harvest-rain, which watereth the earth."

4. What shall I do unto thee, O Ephraim!
What shall I do unto thee, O Judah!
As long as your goodness is like the morning cloud,
And like the dew which early departeth.

ment is expressed in the words: "We shall live *before Him*," experiencing God's presence and blessing. The phrase contrasts with that employed, ch. v., v. 15.

3.—*Then shall we know.*—There is a rise from a resolution simply to acquire a true knowledge of God, to a determination to make such knowledge the object of earnest and unwearied pursuit. The "he," of the elongated future, marks this bent or inclination of mind. To separate the verbs, and connect the first verb with the preceding verse, as Horsley does, would quite destroy the force of the Prophet's language. At the same time the "vau" at the beginning of the verse is influential, intimating that what follows would be the result of the Divine interposition on behalf of the Hebrew nation. I must also observe that this "vau" is omitted in several rabbinical writings, as also by Maimonides (Hilchoth Tephillah, ch. vii.)—*His going forth is fixed.*—As certain and delightful as the dawn of the morning would be the coming forth of the favour of God after the dark night of adversity. This beautiful metaphor is taken from the sunrise. The other images were peculiarly appropriate in Palestine, where rain falls seldom, except in spring and autumn. At these seasons it is heavy, and greatly contributes to the fertility of the soil, on which account the bestowal of it was regarded as among the most necessary of temporal blessings, and its absence a source of awful calamity.—*Harvest-rain.*—The A. V. gives for "Malkosh" *latter rain*; but the Hebrew nouns have nothing of *latter* or *former* implied in their meaning. "Malkosh" is literally *crop-rain*, that which fell just before the season of the harvest. "Yorah" is literally *spring-rain*, or rather the rain which makes to spring; that which fell upon the seed newly sown, and caused the green blade to shoot out of the ground.

4.—*What shall I do unto thee.*—That the declarations contained in the preceding verses are *not* to be viewed as Divine promises, but express the hopes and resolutions of the afflicted Hebrews, appears from the affecting expostulations here addressed to them, and the description of the temporary and evanescent character of their boasted reformation. Like a tender parent who is anxious, if possible, to reclaim a wayward child, God asks what other means could possibly be employed for the recovery of his rebellious people. They had been tried both with mercies and judgments, but without effect.—*Your goodness.*—"Chesed" properly means

5. Therefore have I hewn them by the prophets;
I have slain them by the words of my mouth;
Shall thy judgments still go forth as the light?
6. For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice,
And the knowledge of God, rather than burnt offerings.
7. But they, like other men, have transgressed the covenant,

kindness, benignity, mercy; here *piety, religion,* as Isa. xl., v. 6. Syr. "Your goodness." Pococke's Arab. MS.: "your religion"—*Morning cloud.*—In Palestine and other countries of the same latitude, the dense clouds which cover the heavens during the morning are all gone by nine or ten o'clock; and the dews, however copious, early disappear. "Mashkim" is here, as frequently, to be taken adverbially; *early,* in the morning.

5.—*Therefore have I hewn them.*—The severity of the threatenings communicated through the instrumentality of the Prophets is compared to the incisions made in stone or wood with the axe, and those made in the human body with the sword.—*Slain them with the words of my mouth.*—With the most solemn and awful threatenings.—*Shall thy judgments.*—So Rashi; and thus it refers to verse 4, "What shall I do unto thee?"—To make the pronominal affixes agree, the Sept., Syr., and the Targum read: "*my* judgments," and so likewise Dathe, Kuinoel, Boeckel, Newcome, Boothroyd, and Ewald. Vulg.: "judicia tua," *thy* judgments. There is no variety in the Hebrew MSS., except that *one* of Kennicott's, and *one* of De Rossi's, read in the singular "thy judgment." The meaning is: Shall I still pronounce the sentence *not guilty* against thee?

6.—*I desired mercy.*—"Chesed" means here *true piety,* of which *mercy* or *charity* is only a branch.—*The knowledge of God.*—This likewise means *a practical knowledge* of God, in opposition to that which is merely speculative.

7.—*Like other men.*—Translators and commentators have been greatly divided respecting the precise meaning of "Adam" as occurring in this passage. Rashi, Jerome, Leo Juda, Grotius, Clarius, Manger, Tingstadius, Newcome, Rosenmüller, Boothroyd, and others, regard it as a *proper name,* and suppose the reference to be to the conduct of *Adam* in transgressing the Divine commandment. Kimchi, Munster, Tremellius, Beza, Calvin, Piscator, Zanchius, Mercer, Lowth, De Wette, Maurer, Hitzig, Ewald, Fuerstenthal, and others, take it to be an appellative, and interpret the passage of the treacherous violation of contracts among mankind. In favour of the former view, it is alleged, that it places the guilt of the Israelites in a much more aggravated light. It is, however, very doubtful whether there be any such allusion in these passages; and as to the force of the comparison, it seems sufficiently supplied by supposing *men in general* to be understood, who break the engagements into which they have entered with each other. The Israelites had treated God as if He

There they have dealt treacherously with me.
8. Gilead is a city of evil-doers;
Marked with footsteps of blood.

had been one of themselves, and as if the sanctions of his covenant were as little to be regarded as those of ordinary contracts were by men of unprincipled character. There is no other passage, after the first chapter of Genesis, in which "Adam" is used as a proper name, or in which any reference is made to our first parent. See my rendering of Job xxxi., v. 33, and note. The absolute and indefinite form, too, in which "brith" occurs (compare on the other hand "brithi" *my* covenant, ch. viii., v. 1) shows, that both this noun and the preceding verb "'averu" stand in immediate relation to "Adam," which, as very frequently, is a collective, and is thus used instead of a plural, which it nowhere exhibits. It may also be objected to the first mentioned interpretation, that nowhere in Scripture is God said to have entered into a covenant with Adam. The obligations under which he was placed are represented as those of a *command* or *interdict*, rather than any of a *federal* nature.—The reading "like Edom," proposed by Michaelis, has found no supporters.—*There.*—This points graphically to the northern or Israelitish kingdom as the principal scene of idolatrous defection, and anticipates the regions more specifically referred to in the two following verses. Bishop Horsley: "Even in these circumstances;" and remarks: "This I take to be the force of the adverb "shom," as it is used here, referring neither to place nor time, but to a state of things. The latin *Ibi* might in some degree express it, but we have no word for it in our language."

8.—*Gilead.*—In all probability *Ramoth*-Gilead, the metropolis of the mountainous region beyond Jordan, and south of the river Jabbok, known by the name of Gilead (Josh. xxi., v. 38; I Kings iv., v. 13). It was here that Jacob and Laban entered into a solemn covenant with each other (Gen. xxxi., vv. 21, 25). Burckhardt found ruins of cities on two mountains in that region, still known by the names of Djebel, Djelaâd, and Djelaûd, one or other of which may have been that here mentioned. It was one of the cities of refuge (Deut. iv., v. 43; Josh. xx., v. 8); and appears to have been notorious for bloodshed. See the Babylonian Talmud, Maccoth, fol. 10.—*Evil-doers.*—Some interpreters would restrict this to idolatry, in imitation of the Sept. I, however, think that the phrase must be taken in its more enlarged meaning, as including all manner of wickedness. Of this, indeed, *idolatry* has ever been found to be the fruitful parent. —*Marked with footsteps of blood.* — Various explanations of "'Akubbah" have been advanced; but the simplest is that which regards it as signifying *traced*, from "'Akeb" *the heel, step, print of the foot*, and describing the marks or traces of blood left by the feet of the murderers who resided there. So the Jerusalem Talmud. The Babylonian Talmud: "Cunning for blood." Syr.: "Stained with blood." Jewish Span.: "immunda de sangre." It is also possible that the Prophet refers to the historical fact (II Kings xv., v. 25), from which it appears that fifty of the inhabitants of Gilead were implicated in the regicidal conspiracy against Pekahiah.

9. And as troops of robbers lie in wait for a man,
So is the association of priests:
They commit murder in the way to Shechem;
Yea, they practise deliberate crime.
10. In the house of Israel I have seen a horrible thing:
There, fornication in Ephraim!
Israel polluted!
11. Also for thee, O Judah! a harvest is appointed,
When I return from the captivity of my people.

9.—*Lie in wait.*—"Chakke" is generally considered to be an imitation of the Chaldee form of the Infin. in Piel, from "Chakkak," *to wait, lie in wait for*; but it seems more likely to be the abbreviated form of the Piel participle "M'chakke" the "mem" being dropped, as in "Shabbeach" (Eccles. iv., v. 2), and in several instances of the Pual Participle. See Gesen. Lehrgeb. p. 316.—*In the way to Shechem.*—Shechem was a city of refuge, situated between Ebal and Gerizim, and has, from very ancient times, been the seat of the religious community of the Samaritans. Having been for a time the residence of Jeroboam (I Kings xii., v. 25), its inhabitants became so corrupted, that the priests resident there, way-laid and murdered with impunity the persons who were fleeing to the asylum for refuge. The interposition of the verb "y'ratzchu" between these two nouns occasions no difficulty, since we have instances of nouns in construction being separated. See Gen. vii., v. 6; Isa. xix., v. 8; Hos. xiv., v. 3. In my translation, I have followed the Babylonian Talmud (Maccoth fol. 10), Abarbanel, Fuerstenthal, and others. The authorised version, and many others, following the Targum, translate *with one consent*, which well suits the connection, but is not borne out by Hebrew usage—the term occurring but once (Zeph. iii., v. 9), in this metaphorical acceptation, and then *not* as *here*, but "Shchem echad."—*Deliberate crimes.*—From "Zamam," denoting presumptuous or deliberate wickedness. Rashi: "They lay a deliberate plan of action."

10.—*A horrible thing.*—See Jer. v., v. 30. It is explained immediately after of the atrocious idolatry which, through the influence of the tribe of Ephraim, has spread itself over the whole kingdom of Israel.

11.—*A harvest is appointed.*—Thou also hast transgressed; thy harvest will come; thou shalt be reaped down and sent into captivity. Bishop Horsley renders: "Moreover, O Judah, harvest-work is appointed for thee, when I bring back my people;" and remarks: "Observe that the *vintage* is always an image of the season of judgment; but the *harvest*, of the ingathering of the objects of God's final mercy." But how he could assert this, is inconceivable. See Jer. li., v. 33; Joel iii., v. 13. *Nowhere* in prophecy does it appear to be used in this sense.—*When I return from the captivity,*—I have followed Fuerstenthal, as if the original would be: "mishsh'buth." There is, however, a great diversity of opinion, whether the second part of

CHAPTER VII.

1. When I would have healed Israel,
   Then the iniquity of Ephraim was revealed,
   And the wicked deeds of Samaria:
   For they practised deceit;
   Here, thieves enter in,
   There, robbers spoil without.
2. And they consider not in their hearts,
   That I remember all their wickedness;
   Now that their deeds encompass them,
   And are before my face.
3. With their wickedness they cheer the king,
   And with their falsehoods the princes.

this verse ought to be connected with the next chapter or not. Michaelis, Jahn, Eichhorn, Kuinoel, De Wette, Boothroyd and others, transfer this part of the verse to the following chapter.

1.—*When I would have healed.*—Horsley supposes that the Prophet alludes to the reign of Jeroboam the second, when the kingdom of Israel seemed to be recovering from the loss of strength and territory it had sustained.—*Then the iniquity.*—At that time they continued their idolatry and wicked practices.—*Samaria.*—Being the metropolis of the ten tribes, it was the spring-head of that corruption of manners which overspread the kingdom.—*Thieves enter in.*—Here the Prophet describes the acts of violence that were committed by breaking into, and plundering, private houses, and those which were perpetrated on persons in the streets. The reference is *not* to *foreign enemies*, as Horsley and others expound, but to the lawless Israelites.

2.—*They consider not.*—They do not consider that *mine* eye is upon all their ways; they do not think that *I record* all their wickedness.—*In their hearts.*—Literally: "They do not say *to* their hearts;" but several MSS. read: "bil'babam" "*in* their hearts." This various reading (which is undoubtedly the right one) is supported by the Syr., Vulg., Targum, and the Arab. versions. Both forms describe internal or mental conversation, only "lamed" indicates an endeavour to persuade.—*Encompass them.*—This may either mean, that the evil practices of the Israelites crowded round them as so many causes of punishment, as enemies surround and shut up the object of their attack; or that they crowded about them as so many witnesses to reveal the wickedness of their character.

3.—*They cheer the king.*—Their rulers, instead of repressing, took delight in the immoral and irreligious conduct of the people.

4. They are all adulterers;
They are like an oven, heated by the baker:
Who resteth from heating it,
From the time that he kneadeth the dough,
Until it be leavened.
5. On the day of our king,
When the princes are sick with the fever of wine,
He stretcheth out his hand with the scoffers.

4.—*They are all adulterers.*—People, king, princes.—*Like an oven.*—They burn with unhallowed desires. To place the violent and incontinent character of their lust in the strongest light, the Prophet compares it to a baker's oven, which he raises to such a degree of heat, that he only requires to omit feeding it during the short period of the fermentation of the bread. Such was the libidinous character of the Israelites, that their impure indulgences were subject to but slight interruptions. "Tannur," *oven*, from the Aram. "tannan" *to smoke*, and "nur" *fire*. There are various methods of baking bread in the East, as well as different *ovens* employed for the purpose. They bake bread on the heated ground or sand, and upon heated stones; on a simple plate of iron, with a fire underneath; they have a portable oven of earthenware; and, what most nearly approaches to our idea of an oven, the round pit in the ground, against the heated sides of which, or on the heated stones at the bottom, the bread is baked. There is still another oven, which is common in towns of sufficient population, in Western Asia and Egypt, to support bakers by trade. They are found usually in the markets, where the master has his cakes arranged for sale, while the baking is going on behind. The oven is rather large, and is half occupied by the combustible materials which afford the required heat. The cakes are small, and are baked in less than five minutes. The *oven*, here referred to by the Prophet, is probably the larger kind.—*Who resteth.*—The meaning is, who *only* ceaseth from heating it.—Most interpreters take "me'ir" in the sense of *stirring, rousing up*, etc., and apply it to the stirring of the fire in the oven; but it is preferable to regard it as the part of "'ir," Arab. *to be hot, burning*; hence in Hiph. *to cause to burn, heat*, etc. The interpretation "from the city," given in the Syr., Targum, and Vulg. is altogether inappropriate. Rashi and Kimchi: "Their *unhallowed desires* scarcely cease as long as from the time that the baker kneadeth the dough, until it be leavened." Fuerstenthal adopts this rendering.

5.—*On the day.*—"Yom" is meant *a festal day*; either that of the king's birth, or, as the Targum, Rashi, and Kimchi give it, that of his inauguration. Michaelis thinks the reference is to the accession of a new king to the throne.—*When the princes are sick.*—The Sept., Syr., Targum, Vulg., Abarbanel, Leo Juda, Newcome, Michaelis, and Boothroyd, refer this verb to the root "Chalal;" but, not to insist on its requiring in such case a different punctuation, there is something so intolerably tame in the rendering: "The princes *began* to be heated with wine," that it cannot be admitted as the language

6. For they have made ready their heart,
While they lie in wait;
As an oven, who in the morning,
(For all the night their baker sleepeth)
Burneth as a flaming fire.
7. They are all hot as an oven,
And devour their judges;
All their kings have fallen;
None among them calleth unto me.

of the Prophet.—*He stretcheth out his hand.*—While the courtiers thus indulged to excess, the monarch, forgetting his dignity, participated in their cups, and joined in their scoffs. Houbigant—most uncritically—would have changed "lotzezim" into "letzim." The reduplicate form is intensive, and expresses the awfully profligate character of the persons described. Perhaps by "lotzezim" is meant *jesters* or *mummers*, as represented on Assyrian sculptures. See Bonomi's *Nineveh*, p. 227, fig. iii.

6.—*For they have made ready.*—This verse, as it stands in the original, is very difficult to translate, and the opinions of translators and expositors are very much divided. I have followed the A.V., which agrees with Rashi; and the idea is, that they prepared their hearts for their wicked deeds, just as an oven is prepared for baking. The image is retained by the Prophet from verse 4. Dr. Henderson renders: "For though they approach with their heart warm as an oven, yet it is in their plot;" certainly no translation from the original. He observes: "In their intercourse with their monarch, they approached him with the warmest profession of loyalty; but in private they were showing how to get rid of him. The ringleader waited till he could conveniently carry the plot into execution, and speedily they effected the nefarious purpose." I doubt whether the passage refers to *a ringleader*; I think it refers to the Israelites in general.—*Their baker.*—The Sept., and one MS. read *Ephraim*, for *their baker*. (Various MSS. and several printed editions add the "Yod" in the latter word), and Newcome and Boothroyd adapt this reading, and render: "All the night *Ephraim* sleepeth." "Appehem," which Dathe proposes, and Kuinoel adopts into his Hebrew text, nowhere occurs in the sense of *ira, furor corum.*—The Targum and Syr., however, render: "their anger."

7.—*Hot as an oven, and devour their judges.*—As the fire in the oven devours the fuel, so the persons spoken of destroyed those who were in authority.—*All their kings have fallen.*—During the life of this Prophet, four kings were put to death: Zechariah by Shallum; Shallum by Menahem; Pekahiah by Pekah; and Pekah by Hoshea (II Kings xv). In these violent changes many of the judges, princes, and others must have perished. Notwithstanding these murders and calamities, none called on God. By "their judges" Rashi understands the Sanhedrim, whom they slew because they remonstrated with them for their evil doings. The Jerusalem Talmud (Abodah

8. Ephraim mixeth himself up with the nations;
Ephraim is like a cake not turned.
9. Strangers devour his strength,
But he knoweth it not;
Yea, grey hairs are sprinkled upon him,
Yet he knoweth it not.
10. And the pride of Israel testifieth to his face;
Yet they do not return to the Lord their God,
Nor seek Him for all this.
11. Ephraim is like a silly dove, without understanding,
They call upon Egypt,
They go to Assyria.

Zarah) says, that the verses 5-7 refer to the day of the inauguration of King Jeroboam. On that day, the Talmud says, the courtiers being intoxicated (referring to verse 5), they went to the king, asking him to make them idols. He replied: "*Now* you are intoxicated, perhaps to-morrow you will regret it; come in the morning." Next morning they again went to the king (referring to verse 6). His reply was: "I cannot make you idols, I fear the Sandhedrim." They replied: "We will slay them." (Referring to verse 7, "And devour their judges").

8.—*Mixeth himself up with the nations.*—Ewald renders "Yithbolel" *veraltet*, "hath become old," which might seem to derive some support from the latter part of v. 9; but the verb can, with no propriety, be referred to any other root than "balal." That an intercourse with idolaters, including the adoption of their idolatrous practices, and not specifically the entering into leagues with them, is meant, appears from the following clause, in which to express the worthlessness of the Ephraimitish character, the people are compared to a cake, which from not having been turned, is burnt, and good for nothing.—The Arabs bake their bread on the ground or hearth, covering it with hot embers, and turning it every ten minutes or quarter of an hour, to prevent its being burnt. When neglected it is unfit for food, and is thrown away. Such was the state of the apostate Israelites. They had corrupted themselves, and were only fit for rejection.

9.—*Strangers.*—The Syrians, Assyrians, etc. See II Kings xiii., v. 7; xv., vv. 19, 20; xvii., vv. 3-6.—*Grey hairs are sprinkled.*—The state, drawing to its close, without the fact being observed by its citizens, is compared to a person on whose head grey hairs begin to make their appearance, without his becoming sensible of the approach of age.

10.—*The pride of Israel.*—A repetition of part of chap. v., v. 5, which see.

11.—*Ephraim.*—Though the apostate Israelites had abundant proof of the inefficiency of their idols, yet they returned not in the

12. As they go, I will spread my net upon them;
I will bring them down as the fowls of the air;
I will chastise them,
As it hath been reported to their assembly.
13. Woe unto them! for they have wandered from me!
Destruction unto them! for they have transgressed against me!
Though I have redeemed them,
Yet they have spoken lies against me.

exercise of true repentance to God, who alone could deliver them in the hour of trouble, but formed alliances with foreign powers in the delusive hope of protection.—*Silly dove.*—The simplicity of the dove is proverbial. The Arabs say: "There is nothing more simple than the dove." There is much force and beauty in this comparison of Ephraim to a *silly dove without understanding*, which, when pursued by a bird of prey, trusts to the rapidity of its flight; that is, relies upon its own powers for the means of escape, instead of at once throwing itself into the nearest recess, where the interference of man, or the narrowness of the place, might render it secure from further molestation. *Israel*, instead of taking shelter under the wing of the Almighty, who is a God *near at hand*, rested his hope of defence upon the celerity of his negociations, stretching his wing towards Assyria or Egypt, but in the length of the flight is overtaken, secured, and dies in the cruel talons of his unrelenting pursuer.—*Egypt—Assyria.*—By the former they were *betrayed*; by the latter, *ruined.*

12.—*As they go.*—To those nations for help.—*I will spread my net.*—I will cause them to be taken by those in whom they trusted.—*The spreading of the net*, refers to the taking of birds that are on the ground; *the bringing down*, to those that are in the air, by the use of missile weapons.—*I will chastise them.*—Instead of the Hiphil, which occurs only here, the Soncin. edition of the Prophets, and a few MSS. read in Piel.—*As it hath been reported to their assembly.*—The public congregations, to which the Divine messages were delivered. God had given them sufficient warning by the Prophets. — Bishop Newcome renders, and after him Boothroyd: "I will chastise them *when they hearken* to their assembly;" *i.e.*, when they take the counsel of their elders to go down to Egypt for help, and trust in the arm of the Assyrians for succour.—The Targum: "When they hearken to their own counsels."—According to Rashi, the Prophet refers to Jerem. ch. xlii.

13.— *Woe unto them.*—"Oi" is here *denunciative*, and not *plaintive.* —*Wandered.*—The verb "Nadad" is often used of the flight of birds that wander from their nest. See Prov. xxvii., v. 8; Isa. xvi., v. 2; Jer. iv., v. 25; and is here employed with reference to the *silly dove*, verse 11.—*Redeemed them.*—The redemption from Egypt, and that which, in numerous instances, they afterwards experienced, God adduces in aggravation of their guilt. Their preferring the service of idols to that of the true God, was not merely a practical denial of

14. And they cried not unto me with their heart,
When they howled upon their beds;
For the sake of corn and wine they assemble,
But they rebel against me.
15. Whether I chastised, or strengthened their arm,
Yet they devised evil against me.
16. They return, but not to the Most High;
They are like a deceitful bow;
Their princes shall fall by the sword,
On account of the insolence of their language:
This shall be their derision in the land of Egypt.

His all-sufficiency, but a violation of the solemn pledge which they had given of undivided obedience to His law, when, as stated, ch. vi., vv. 1-3, they professed to return to Him.

14.—*They cried not unto me with their heart.*—When pressed down by the calamities which their sins had brought upon them, they cried to God for deliverance, but without any genuine repentance or sincere resolution to obey him in future. *Upon their beds.*—In the night-season, when their anxiety prevented them from sleeping.—*They assemble.*—Rashi: "They store up for themselves corn and wine, therefore they rebel against me." Sept. "they *cut themselves*;" supposing that in token of grief, or, like the maddened priests of Baal (I Kings xviii., v. 28), they inflicted wounds upon their bodies. This is also, in all probability, what the Syr. translator intended. But though "Yithgod'du" is found in several MSS., and in the edition of Soncino of 1486, it is not sufficiently supported to warrant its adoption in the text. The Targum, Abul-walid, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Munster, Piscator, Leo Juda, Rosenmüller, Maurer, and Gesenius, support the textual reading, and render *congregate.* This decidedly agrees better with the following part of the verse. Instead of returning to God, the Israelites assembled before their idols to propitiate them by sacrifices, in order to obtain a fruitful harvest. To mark more strongly the atrociousness of their apostacy, "bi" "*against* me," is employed, instead of "mimmenni", "*from* me," the preposition that otherwise follows "sur" which is frequently used of apostacy from God to idolatrous practices. The phrase is in this case best rendered by *rebel against*, as in the A. V.

15.—*Whether I chastised.*—Whether God inflicted punishment on them, or showed them favour, yet they rejected Him for their idols.

16.—*But not to the Most High.*—Hoshea, who is fond of brevity, uses here and ch. xi., v. 7, "'al," instead of the longer form "'el'yon," *Most High.* Kametz is used instead of Patach, on account of the accent. One of De Rossi's MSS. reads "el" *God.*—What the apostate Israelites worshipped, so far from being the Most High, was the direct opposite—wood or stone. Most moderns, less aptly take "'al" in its adverbial acceptation, and render, *they return not upwards*; which yields, however, nearly the same meaning.—*Deceitful bow.*—Some

CHAPTER VIII.

1. Set a trumpet to thy mouth:
"Like an eagle against the house of the Lord!"
Because they have transgressed my covenant,
And have trespassed against my law.
2. They may then cry unto me: "O my God!
We—Israel—acknowledge Thee!"

render *a slack bow*, supposing that its inutility, owing to the absence of elasticity, is what is intended; but *false* or *deceitful* better suits the connection, and the reference is to something faulty in the construction of the bow, which causes it to shoot or throw out the arrow wide of the mark.—There seems no ground for the opinion of Gesenius, that the phrase is used poetically for treacherous bowmen, who feign fight in order to deceive. The Israelites hypocritically pretended to turn to God, but their actions took a different direction.—*The insolence of their language.*—This doubtless consisted in their proud boast of Egypt as a source of protection from the Assyrian invasion, which God was about to bring upon them.—*Their derision.*—*i.e.*, the subject of derision to the Egyptians, to whom they should in vain apply for help.

1.—*Set a trumpet to thy mouth.*—It is not unusual for the Prophets, without naming the invading foe, to announce his approach. See Isa. xiii., v. 2.—The words: *to thy palate the trumpet*! are singularly abrupt, and indicate the suddenness of the threatened invasion.—*Like an eagle.*—If this be a prophecy against *Judah*, as some have supposed, then by the *eagle* Nebuchadnezzar is meant, who is often compared to this king of birds. See Jerem. xlviii., v. 40; Ezek. xvii., v. 3.; Dan. vii., v. 4. But if the prophecy be against *Israel*, which is the most likely, then *Shalmanezer*, King of Assyria, is intended, who for his rapidity, avarice, rapacity, and strength, is fitly compared to this royal bird.—*The house of the Lord.*—This cannot mean here *the temple* at Jerusalem, which is otherwise so designated, since the threatenings are most probably denounced against the kingdom of the ten tribes. It must, therefore, be taken to denote the people of Israel, the whole nation viewed as the family of God. According to Rashi, the Shechinah says to the Prophet to set the trumpet to his mouth, and to call the enemy to come upon the nation as quick as the flight of an eagle. Kimchi, however, says that here it is the same as ch. v., v. 8.

2.—*They may then cry unto me.*—"Yizàku" is the future used potentially, and not without irony.—*O my God.*—This is construed as a distributive with the plural verb—each of the persons spoken of being regarded as using the language. Inattention to this has led the Syrian translator to render: "O *our* God."—*We—Israel—acknowledge Thee.*—*Israel* is in apposition with: "We acknowledge thee," and not the nominative to "Yizàku," from which it is too far removed.

3. Israel hath rejected what is good;
Therefore shall the enemy pursue him.
4. They made kings, but it was not from me;
They made princes, but I approved not;
Their silver and their gold
Have they made into idols,
Only to be cut off.
5. Remove far from thee thy calf, O Samaria!—
Mine anger is kindled against them:
How long shall they be incapable of purity?

It is entirely omitted in the Sept., Syr., and Arab., as it is in one of Kennicott's MSS., and in one of De Rossi's. Houbigant's conjecture to read: "O God of Israel" is unnecessary. Dimock whilst adopting the conjecture of Houbigant proposes yet another alteration, viz., to read "lo" *not*, instead of "li" *to me*, thus: "They will *not* cry out: "O God of Israel, we acknowledge Thee." There is no need for such emendations. The present position of the word *Israel* is more in keeping with the style of Hoshea. Fuerstenthal also renders: "Wir erkennen Dich nun, wir, Dein Israel."

3.—*Israel hath rejected what is good.*—To reject what was truly excellent, such as the worship of God, and the practice of religion, argued an awfully depraved state of moral feeling.—The use of "*Israel*," finely contrasts with that made of it in the preceding verse. "Tob," *good*, is by Jerome, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and others, taken for *God* Himself, who is described as *good, and doing good* (Psalm cxix., v. 68). It seems, however, to be used in a more general acceptation.

4.—*They made kings.*—Some think the kings and princes here referred to were Shallum, Menahem, Pekahiah, Pekah, Hoshea, and such of their partisans as were invested with authority; but from the allusion made in the following verses to the origination of image worship in Israel, it is more probable that the entire series of Israelitish kings and rulers is intended. Though in the providence of God, and agreeably to the declaration of Ahiah the Prophet, the ten tribes revolted from the house of David, and set up a separate and independent kingdom, yet they were actuated merely by rebellious motives, and had no regard to a Divine sanction (I Kings xi., vv. 31-39; xii., v. 20).—*Approved not.*—This is often the meaning of the verb "Yadà."—Syr.: "and did not acquaint me," *i.e*, held no communications with me upon the subject. The Hebrew, however, will not bear this interpretation.—*Only to be cut off.*—The Israelites could not seriously, or in reality, have intended their own destruction, but they acted as if they had; and it would assuredly overtake them. Fuerstenthal renders: "Therefore they shall be cut off."

5.—*Remove far from thee.*—This part of the verse is very difficult, and Hebrew as well as Christian commentators are by no means agreed as to its meaning. Rashi: "God has forsaken thee, O Samaria,

6. For it is from Israel;
   An artificer made it, therefore it is no God;
   Surely the calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.
7. Because they have sown wind,
   They shall reap the whirlwind;
   They shall have no stalk;
   The bud shall yield no meal;
   Even if it should yield it,
   Strangers shall swallow it up.

for the sins of the calves placed in Beth-el." Aben Ezra: "Thy calf has forsaken thee, O Samaria, for thy city will be destroyed, and thy inhabitants will be led into captivity." Kimchi: "Through thy calf, O Samaria, thou art forsaken, and thou wilt be driven out of thy land." Fuerstenthal: "Him thou hast forsaken, and hast followed after thy calves, O Samaria." Henderson: "Thy calf, O Samaria, is abominable." Houbigant and Dathe transpose this part to the end of the verse, so as to connect it with the next verse. I have followed Newcome. The Prophet says: "Remove thy calf, *i.e.*, abandon thy idolatry."—*O Samaria.*—The metropolis appears to be used here by synecdoche for the whole land occupied by the ten tribes; but at the same time, there can be little doubt that its inhabitants were pre-eminent in their devotion to idolatry. The introduction of the worship of the golden calves by Jeroboam, in imitation of that of Apis, at Memphis, and of Mnevis, at Heliopolis, which he must have seen during his residence in Egypt, paved the way for the imitation and adoption of the gross idolatries practised by the Phœnicians, Syrians, and Chaldeans.—*Mine anger is kindled.*—This is an anthropopathic mode of expression of frequent occurrence in the Hebrew Scriptures, denoting the unconquerable opposition of God to all moral evil, and the severity of the punishment with which it is visited.—*How long shall they be incapable of purity.*—How long shall they be obstinately attached to the impure service of idols, and reject the means by which they might be recovered from its stain and punishment.

6.—*For it is from Israel.*—The golden calf had its origin in *Israel*; it was not made by any of the surrounding idolaters.—*The calf of Samaria shall be broken in pieces.*—*This* like that of the desert. Henderson renders: "Shall become flames."

7.—*They have sown wind.*—As the husbandman reaps the same kind of grain which he has sown, but in far greater abundance, so he who sows the wind shall have whirlwind to reap.—*They shall have no stalk.*—Nothing that can yield a *blossom.*—*The bud shall yield no meal.*—If they should have a stalk, and that stalk should have a blossom, that blossom shall yield no *fruit*, and if there be fruit, the sower shall not enjoy it; for *strangers shall eat* it.—The Israelites should be unsuccessful in all their undertakings: and whatever partial gains they might acquire, would be eagerly seized by the Assyrians.

8. Israel is swallowed up;
They are now among the nations,
As a vessel wherein there is no pleasure;
9. For they went up to Assyria,
Like a solitary wild ass:
Ephraim hath given the hire of love.

Houbigant, Newcome, Boothroyd, and others differ from the Masoretic division of the words, and render: "The stalk hath no bud; it will yield no flower."

8.—*Israel is swallowed up.*—What Hoshea had just foretold is here realised in prophetic vision. He sees them in a state of exile—the objects of contempt to their oppressors.—*As a vessel.*—A similar expression occurs (Jer. xlviii., v. 38), with an addition, as to its being broken; which suggests that the vessel was of earthenware from which the allusion is taken. To understand the use of an earthen vessel, as a figure of insignificance and worthlessness, it should be stated that the earthenware vessels in common use in the East, for various purposes, are so exceedingly cheap that they form the least valuable possession which any one can have. The common sorts, moreover, are not well or strongly compacted, and are so constantly breaking as to be proverbially perishable.

9.—*They went up to Assyria.*—The verb "'Alah," *to go up*, is elsewhere used of foreigners coming to the land of Israel; but is here employed with singular propriety of the Israelites going to Assyria, to intimate their depressed condition, and their acknowledgment of the superiority of the Assyrian power. The reference is *not* to their going into captivity, but to the embassy which they sent for the purpose of obtaining aid from that quarter.—*Like a solitary wild ass.*—The point of comparison in the "wild ass," is his untractableness, and his disposition to take his own way, in consequence of which he forsakes the society of others, and loves the solitariness of the desert. Thus it was with Israel. Despite of all counsels and warnings given them by the Prophets, they persisted in entering into foreign alliances.—The wild ass commonly inhabits the dry and mountainous parts of the deserts of Great Tartary, but not higher than about lat. 48°. They are migratory, and arrive in vast troops to feed, during the summer, on the tracts to the north and east of the Sea of Aral. About autumn they collect in herds of hundreds, and direct their course southward towards Judea, to enjoy a warm retreat during winter. But they more usually retire to Persia, where they are found in the mountains of Casbin; and where part of them remain during the whole year. These animals were anciently found in Palestine, Syria, Arabia Deserta, Mesopotamia, Phrygia, and Lycaonia, but they rarely occur in those regions at the present time, and seem to be almost entirely confined to Tartary, some parts of Persia and India, and Africa. It is taller and more dignified than the domestic ass; it holds the head higher, and the legs are more elegantly shaped. Even the head, though larger in proportion to the body, has a finer appearance, from the forehead being more arched; the neck by which it is

10. Yet though they have hired among the nations,
I will now gather them;
And they shall suffer a little,
By reason of the tribute of the king of princes.

sustained is much longer, and has a more graceful bend. It has a short mane of dark and woolly hair; and a stripe of dark bushy hair also runs along the ridge of the back from the mane to the tail. The hair of the body is of a silver grey, inclining to flaxen colour in some parts, and white under the belly. It is soft and silken, similar in texture to that of the camel. (This note was accidentally omitted, Job xxxix., v. 5).—*Ephraim hath given the hire of love.*—"Tanah," *to give presents, hire,* is purposely chosen, to convey the idea of a violation of the marriage contract by unlawful commerce with another party—the derivatives "Ethnan" and "Ethnah," properly denoting a gift or reward given to a whore. See ch. ii., v. 12. The aggravation of the evil is signified by representing the female as offering these rewards to her paramours to induce them to commit adultery, instead of her being prevailed upon by presents made by them. Though in Hiphil, the verb has here the same signification as in Kal.

10.—*Though they have hired.*—The Sept., Syr., Vulg., Targum, and Arab. read as if the root be from "nathan", according to which, the Israelites are represented as *delivered over to,* or placed in the power of the nations. This rendering is not suitable to the connection, and it is most likely that the Prophet repeated the verb he had just used in the preceding verse.—*I will now.*—Shortly.—*Gather them.*—The nations.—The verb "Kabatz," is used in Piel in a bad as well as in a good sense. Instead of affording any assistance, the Assyrians would be collected against the apostate Israelites, invade their land, and carry them into captivity. Into that state of suffering, imposed upon them by the King of Assyria, they were shortly to be brought, as a punishment for their idolatrous desertion of the true worship of God.—*They shall suffer a little by reason of the tribute.*—This part of the verse has been variously interpreted. Gesenius renders: "And they (the hostile nations) shall presently set them free from the burden of the king" (from his oppressive yoke); but without any suitable sense—the whole passage being of a comminatory nature, and not promissory of good. "Hechel" the Hiphil of "chalal" has nowhere the signification of *loosing* or *setting* free. Nor is there any propriety in taking it in the usual sense of *beginning,* and so construing it with "M'at," as if the latter word were the infinitive of "Maát," *to be diminished.* The ancient versions refer to "chul," as the root, in the sense *of waiting, desisting from,* etc. In this reference I concur; only I would abide by the signification, *to be in pain, affliction,* which is that given to the verb in the authorised version. Such construction alone suits the connection.—*King of princes.*—Twenty-one Hebrew MSS., the Sept., Aq., Syr., Vulg., Targ., and Talmud Babyl. supply the copulative "Vau" before "Sarim." So Kimchi, Mercer, Piscator, Grotius, Houbigant, Dathe, Michaelis, Kuinoel, Newcome, Tingstadius, Fuerstenthal, and others. It has been doubted, however, whether according to the resolution of the word, they should be

11. When Ephraim multiplied altars for sin,
They became to him altars to sin.
12. I may prescribe to him my laws by myriads,
They are treated as a strange thing.
13. The sacrifices which they should offer to me,

referred to the native king and princes, or to those of Assyria. Some, as Maurer, take them to be the nominative to "vayochelu," and make the sense end with "Massa," *the burden* or *tribute*, supposing the heavy taxes imposed by the Israelitish rulers to be intended. The best sense is brought out by reading in construction *the king of princes*, and applying the phrase to the king of Assyria, who had many kings and princes subject to his sway. Comp. Isa. x., v. 8. Thus Pococke's Arab. MS., Leo Juda, Eichhorn, Boeckel, Goldwitzer, Hitzig, and Ewald. The *tribute*, was the thousand talents of silver exacted by Menahem, and paid to Pul (II Kings xv., vv. 19-22).

11.—*When Ephraim multiplied altars.*—By multiplying altars, in opposition to the express prohibition (Deut. xii., vv. 13-14), the Ephraimites not only contracted great guilt, but paved the way for the introduction of other sins There is an easy but beautiful variation in the repetition of the words. As used the second time, "chata" possesses considerable emphasis. Comp. for a similar instance of varied repetition Isa. xxvii., v. 5. It shows how much the mind of the Prophet was affected by the wickedness of his people. Boothroyd renders: "Because Ephraim hath multiplied altars for sin, altars shall be to him for the punishment of sin." He supposes that there is a play on the word "chata" in its double sense. The idea would then be, that, as Ephraim had erected many altars for the service of idols, so he should go into a land where he would find such altars only. This idea is partly supported by the Targum. Fuerstenthal renders: "Ephraim häufte Altäre zur Versöhnung—Ach! diese gereichten ihm zur Sünde!" The idea of this rendering is, that Ephraim made many altars to atone thereon for his sins, and these very altars became to him to sins.

12.—*I may prescribe.*—The Hebrew is continuative and potential, and is equivalent to: I *have* prescribed, I *still* prescribe by my Prophets, and I *may go on* prescribing; it will be of no avail.—*My laws by myriads.*—The idea of number is evidently designed to express the abundant provisions God had made in His written law, and its enforcement by the Prophets, against the commission of idolatry.—Ewald renders: "by thousands." Hitzig: "by the thousands." Newcome and Dimock conjectured we should read "dibre," *the words* of my law. Dathe: "I have described to them many laws."—*They are treated.*—"Chashab" signifies not only to *think*, *regard*, etc., but also to treat in a manner corresponding to the estimation in which a person or thing is held. Tanchum: "They reject them like a strange thing to which no regard is paid."

13.—*The sacrifices which they should offer.*—It seems preferable to abide by this usual signification of the verb, which it has likewise in

They sacrifice them, and eat the flesh;
Therefore the Lord accepteth them not;
Now will He remember their iniquity,
And will punish their sins:
They shall return to Egypt.

14. For Israel hath forgotten his Maker,
And built temples;
And Judah hath multiplied fortified cities;
But I will send a fire into his cities,
And it shall consume the palaces thereof.

CHAPTER IX.

1. Carry not thy joy, O Israel!
To exultation, like the nations,
For thou hast gone astray from thy God;
Thou hast loved hire, on all the corn-floors.

Aramaic, Arabic, and Ethiopic, than to follow Kimchi, who refers the noun to a root "habhab," to which he assigns the signification *to burn, scorch, roast*; or Ewald, who, appealing to the Chald. and Arab., renders: "raw offerings." For the reduplicate form, comp. ch. iv., v. 18; which word the Sept., Syr., and Targum appear to have followed in this place, of which Hitzig seems to approve.—*Therefore the Lord accepteth them not.*—God rejected the sacrifices that were offered, not according to His own appointment, but to gratify the carnal appetite of the worshippers.—*Now.*—Speedily, shortly.—*They shall return to Egypt.*—Many of them did return to Egypt after the conquest of Palestine by Shalmanezer, and many after the ruin of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar; but they had in effect returned to Egypt by setting up the worship of the golden calves, which were an imitation of the Egyptian *Apis*.

14.—*And built temples.*—Doubtless idolatrous temples erected after the models of those in use among the Syrians and Phœnicians. —*Multiplied fortified cities.*—Though idolatry had not made the same progress in Judah, the inhabitants nevertheless evinced a want of confidence in God by fortifying a number of cities, to which they trusted for defence.—Ewald strongly asserts, that the words of this verse appear to have been inserted from some book of Amos no longer in existence! Compare, however, for the latter distich, Jer. xlix., v. 27; Amos i., vv. 4, 7, 10, 12, 14; ii., vv. 2, 5; and see note on Amos i., v. 4.

1.—*Carry not.*—Literally: "Rejoice not to exultation."—The Sept., Syr., Targum, and Vulg. read: "exult not;" but contrary to the *usus loquendi*, which requires the verb following "al" to be in the future tense.—*Like the nations.*—Some find in the comparison "like the nations," an imitation of their idolatrous festivities; but

2. Neither the floor nor the vat shall feed them;
   And the new wine shall deceive them.
3. They shall not dwell in the land of the Lord;
   But Ephraim shall return to Egypt,
   And in Assyria, they shall eat what is unclean.
4. They shall not pour out wine to the Lord,

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the language is rather predictive of the joyless condition to which the Israelites were to be reduced. While those by whom they were surrounded, and especially their Assyrian invaders, should indulge in unrestrained mirth, they should experience affliction and sorrow. There is most probably a reference to the joy occasioned by the league entered into with Pul, by which peace seemed to be secured. Their joy was to be of short duration, and, therefore, required to be moderate. Instead of "Kaammim" *like* the nations, thirteen MSS., and five editions read "baammim" *among* the nations, of which Rosenmüller, following Abarbanel, approves.—*Thou hast loved hire on all the corn-floors.*—This is susceptible of various interpretations. The most probable seems to be, that they attributed the plenty of their corn-floors to the favour of the idols whom they served; and acknowledged the obligation either by giving to them the offerings therefrom which were due to the Lord, or by erecting altars to their honour on their corn-floors, as an act of thanksgiving for a good harvest, which they attributed to them, or in order to obtain one. Both things may indeed have been done. The Targum seems to take the latter sense—"You have erred from the worship of your God; you have loved to serve idols on all corn-floors."

2.—*Shall deceive them.*—Twenty-six MSS., three editions, the Sept., Syr., Targ., and Vulg., read: "in them," *i.e.*, *them*, the Israelites, instead of "in her," the received reading, and so I have translated. The Massorah observes: "This is one of the two passages which are written "in *her*," and mean "in *them*."

3.—*In the land of the Lord.*—Canaan was called *the land of the Lord*, because He had appropriated it for an inheritance to those whom He had chosen to be His peculiar people. It was His gift to Abraham and his posterity, to be enjoyed by them on condition of their fidelity in His service. For this end He attached to it His special blessing, Deut. xi., vv. 10-12. The return to Egypt being here mentioned in connection with an exile in Assyria, proves that it is to be taken literally, and that it is not designed to express a servitude similar to that of Egypt. See ch. viii., v. 13. The fulfilment of this prediction, in the history of the ten tribes, is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. No doubt the number that fled to Egypt was small, compared with the body of the nation carried into the Assyrian exile.—*What is unclean.*—Prohibited food, meats pronounced unclean by the Mosaic law. Comp. Ezek. iv., v. 13. To such necessity should they be reduced as captives.

4.—*Pour out wine.*—"Nasach," is used of the pouring out of wine for a libation.—*Please Him.*—"Arab," properly *to mix*,

Neither shall their sacrifices please Him;
They shall be to them as the bread of mourners,
All that eat thereof shall be unclean;
For their bread shall be for themselves;
It shall not come into the house of the Lord.
5. What will ye do on the day of assembly?
On the day of the Lord's festival?
6. For, behold, they go away from destruction,
But Egypt shall gather them;
Memphis shall bury them;
As for their coveted treasuries of money,
Nettles shall possess them;
Thorns shall be in their tents.

mingle, came to signify *sweet, agreeable, pleasing*, from the circumstance, that what was pleasant to the taste, often consisted of mixed ingredients. — *Bread of mourners.* — By the law, a dead body, and every thing that related to it, the house where it lay, and the persons who touched it, were all polluted and unclean; and whatever they touched was considered as defiled. See Numb. xix., vv. 14, 15, 22; Jer. xvi., vv. 7, 8; Ezek. xxiv., v. 17; Hagg. ii., vv. 12, 13. Instead of feasting upon the sacrifices as their fathers had been accustomed to do, when they slew them according to the law, which was always an occasion of joy, they should be placed in circumstances in which no such sacrifices could be offered, and no such feasts enjoyed. Their food should all be common—"lenaphshom" *for their soul or life, i.e.*, merely for its sustenance; not fit to be presented to the Lord.

5.—*What will ye do on the day of assembly.*—When ye shall be despoiled of every thing by the Assyrians; for the Israelites who remained in the land after its subjection to the Assyrians, did worship the true God, and offer unto Him the sacrifices appointed by the law, though in an imperfect manner; and it was a great mortification to them to be deprived of their religious festivals in the land of strangers. —The exposition of Rashi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Mercer, and others, according to which, the day of punishment represented under the idea of sacrifice, is meant, cannot be sustained.

6.—*They go away from destruction.* —The Prophet here specially describes those Israelites who should take alarm at the invasion of the country by the Assyrians, and flee for safety into Egypt. They imagined that their stay there would only be temporary; but it is predicted that they should no more return to their possessions, and be buried in their father's sepulchres, but should die in the land, and have their interment among the mummies of Egypt.—*Egypt shall gather them.* —"Kabatz," *to gather*, is here used in reference to the removal of the soul at death into the world of spirits, and is equivalent to "Asaph," *to be gathered to one's fathers.*—When it is said that Egypt should gather and Memphis (the great necropolis of that country)

7. The days of visitation are come;
The days of recompence are come;
Israel shall know that the Prophet was foolish,
That the spiritual man was mad:
For the greatness of thine iniquity,
And thy great provocation.
8. Ephraim expected help from God;

bury the Israelitish fugitives, the meaning is that they should be removed out of this world, and that their bodies should be buried there.—The personification is employed, as usual, for the sake of effect.—*Their coveted treasuries.*—"Machmad," *desire, covetousness*; that which is *the object of desire, what is covetable, coveted*, from "chamad" *to desire, covet.* The idea of treasury is supplied by the connection, and so Rashi and the Targum. "Keseph" is used generally of *money*, as in most other places, when "Zahab," *gold*, is not combined with it.—Others, less aptly, explain the words of houses, palaces, etc., adorned with silver. On leaving those treasures which they could not carry with them, the Israelites would naturally bury them in the earth, which accounts for the very significant phrase: "The nettles shall inherit them."—*Nettles.*—The Hebrew word "Kimosh," (Vulg. *urtica*) very properly denotes the common nettle, one of those offensive weeds which at once indicate a neglect of cultivation and hinder us from gathering what else of a vegetable nature may be instructive and engaging. The common nettle *(urtica dioica)*, many ages since, had a three-fold application;—as nutritive, when gathered young as a pot-herb; as yielding tough fibres for the manufacture of cloth; and as a vesicatory, or producing irritation and blisters when laid upon a suffering part of the body.—*Thorns.*—"Choach," a thorny, prickly plant, probably the prickly pear. It is, however, difficult to identify it with any particular species.

7.—*The days of visitation.*—Of punishment.—*The Prophet was foolish.*—The *false* prophet or prophets by whom the people of the ten tribes were seduced from the right worship of God, who taught them to worship the golden calves, and otherwise encouraged them in their idolatrous practices. Thus Pococke's Arab. MS.: "He that pretends to prophecy," and Kimchi: "lying prophets." With this, the phrase: "the spiritual man" is synonymous; one pretending to inspiration, or professing to deliver oracles under the influence of a Divine afflatus.—*And thy great provocation.*—From the use of "Satam" in the sense of *hating, evincing hostility*, etc., there can be little doubt that the derivative "Mastemah," which occurs only in this and the following verse, has the signification of *hostility, provoking conduct, provocation.* That of *snare*, or *trap*, which Gesenius assigns to it, is not borne but, even by the Syriac. The idolatrous practices of the Israelites are meant by which they provoked the righteous indignation of God.

8.—*Ephraim expected help from God.*—The Hebrew words: "tzophe Ephraim," are not in construction, and to be rendered as in

The Prophet is a fowler's snare in all his ways;
The cause of provocation in the house of his god.
9. They have deeply corrupted themselves,
As in the days of Gibeah;
He will remember their iniquity,
And will punish their sins.

10. Like grapes in the desert, I found Israel;
As the early figs on the fig-tree when first ripe,

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most versions: "the watchman of Ephraim," to justify which construction various modes of exegesis have been resorted to; among others that of Horsley, who would have the watchman to be Elijah! Nor can the rendering of Ewald be sustained, who gives the passage: "Ein Späher ist Ephraim gegen mein Gott," *Ephraim is a spy against my God.*" When "'im" signifies *against*, it follows verbs of more active import. "Ephraim schaut nach Weissagungen aus neben meinem Gott," *Ephraim looks for prophecies besides my God*—the rendering of Hitzig, is equally objectionable. I agree with Gesenius and Lee, in assigning to: "tzaphah" in this place the signification of *looking out, expecting*, as in Psalm v., v. 4; Lament. iv., v. 17, in Piel. "'Im" *with*, is used elliptically for "Mĕim" *from with, i.e., from.* A similar ellipsis occurs, Job xxvii., v. 13: "This is the portion of a wicked man *from* ('im, *with*) God." What the Prophet asserts is, that the Ephraimites indulged in expectations of good from God, notwithstanding their dereliction of His worship in its pure and legitimate forms, and their adoption of the idolatrous practices of the heathen around them. In this they were encouraged by the false Prophets, who caught them by their ensnaring doctrines, as is declared immediately after.—*In the house of his god.*—Not the temple or people of the true God, but the temple or temples in which the false worship was performed, which the Prophets here reprobated were specially active in promoting.

9.—*As in the days of Gibeah.*—So great was the depravity evinced by those whose conduct the Prophet here describes, that it could only be paralleled by the atrocity of the inhabitants of Gibeah, specified Judges xix., vv. 22-30.

10.—*Like grapes in the desert.*—The point of comparison in the verse is the delight with which a traveller enjoys grapes found in a desert, in which they were unexpected, and where they served most opportunely to quench his thirst; or the early fig, which is accounted a great delicacy in the East. When God entered into a convenant with the people of Israel at Sinai, they were regarded by Him with delight, being free from idolatry, and engaging to adhere to His service.—*Israel.*—The ancestors of the Hebrew nation.—*They.*—These very persons.—*Went to Baal-peor.*—At Baal-peor, they proved faithless, and indulged in the very atrocities of which their posterity were guilty in the days of the Prophet. For the transaction referred

I regarded your fathers;
But they went to Baal-peor,
And separated themselves to the object of shame;
They became abominable, like the object of their love.
11. As for Ephraim, their glory shall flee away like a bird;
There shall be no birth, nor pregnancy, nor conception!
12. Yea, though they should rear their children,
I would take them away before manhood;
Yea, woe unto them, when I depart from them!
13. I see Ephraim, like Tyre, planted in a pleasant place;
But Ephraim shall bring out his children to the murderer.

to, see Numb. xxv., vv. 1-5. Priapism, which Hoshea justly characterises as in the highest degree abominable, was the worship peculiarly acceptable to the god of Peor. See Calmet and Winer *in voc.*—*Separated themselves.*—"Nazar" signifies *to separate oneself* from any person or thing, and also followed by "lamed" to separate or *devote oneself* to some religious object. Hence the substantive "Nazir," a Nazarite; "Nezer," consecration.—*To the object of shame.*—"Bosheth" is the abstract for the concrete, and denotes the obscene or shameful idol which the Moabites worshipped.—*They became abominable.*—The Hebrews became as abominable as the impure idol whose rites they celebrated. The sages say: "He that serveth an abomination, is himself an abomination."

11.—*As for Ephraim.*—"Ephraim," from "parah," *to be fruitful* (Gen. xli., v. 52). Such may be his name; but *Their glory.*—In contrast with "bosheth, *shame*, in the preceding verse. The idolatrous conduct of the Israelites should meet with a fit retribution. Instead of having an increase of children, that might grow up, and become the *glory* of the land, those who might now be accounted such should speedily be removed into Assyria, and there would be nothing but sterility to characterise the nation.—*No birth.*—The order of the words presents an instance of the *gradatis inversa.*

12.—*When I depart from them.*—Ewald and Hitzig: "When I *look away* from them; contending that we should read "Beshuri;" but the present punctuation is supported by the Vulg. and the Targum. The idea is, *when I withdraw my protection from them*; no longer showing them any favour, but delivering them over to their enemies. For the abortive attempt of Lyra to prove a corruption of the passage by the Jews, and to palm upon the rendering of the lxx. the doctrine of the incarnation of the founder of the Christian faith, see Pococke.

13.—*Like Tyre, planted.*—The point of comparison is the beautiful situation of Tyre. See Ezek. xxvii., v. 3; xxviii., vv. 12, 13. The notion of planting seems to have been suggested by the name of

14. Give them, O Lord! what Thou wilt give:
Give them a miscarrying womb, and dry breasts.
15. All their wickedness is in Gilgal;
For there they have excited my hatred;
On account of the wickedness of their deeds,
I will drive them out of my house;
I will love them no more:
For all their princes are revolters.
16. Ephraim is smitten, their root is dried up;
They shall produce no fruit;
Yea, though they should beget children,
I will slay the beloved of their womb.
17. My God will reject them,
Because they did not hearken unto Him;
And they shall be wanderers among the nations!

Ephraim. The territory occupied by that tribe, and several of the other nine, was distinguished for its beauty and fertility; and the prosperity of its inhabitants, who traded extensively with the Phœnician ports, was only surpassed by *Tyre* herself. Yet the fruit of this lovely region was only to be produced in order to its being destroyed. The inhabitants were to be slain in great numbers with the sword. The Targum: "Yet Ephraim bringeth out his children to be slaughtered as sacrifices for the idols," and Rashi adopts this paraphrase.

14.—*Give them, O Lord.*—There is an uncommon beauty in these words. The Prophet, seeing the evils that were likely to fall upon the nation, begins to make intercession for them. Since Ephraim was to bring out his children to the murderer, then it was *mercy* to ask for them that they might have no children. "Since such are the evils which await their children" he says, "grant them, O Lord, as a blessing, the sorrows of barrenness." What God had before (verse 11) pronounced as a punishment, should be a mercy.

15.—*In Gilgal.*—See ch. iv., v. 15. Being one of the chief places of idolatrous worship, the wickedness of the nation might be said to be concentrated in it.—*Out of my house.*—For the sense in which "house" is to be taken, see on ch. viii, v. 1.—*All their princes.*—The political power became the fountain of corruption.

16.—*Their root is dried up.*—The figurative language here employed is suggested by the meaning of the name *Ephraim*, as in the verses 11 and 13.

17.—*My God.*—The pronominal affix in "Elohai" is omitted by the Sept., Arab., and one of Kennicott's MSS. It is, however, in such connection, more in the style of Hoshea than "Elohim."—*Because they did not hearken.*—Here the Prophet seems to apologise for the severity of these denunciations; and to vindicate the Divine justice from which they proceeded.

CHAPTER X.

1. Israel is a luxurious vine,
Whose fruit is very abundant;
According to the abundance of his fruit,
He increased altars;
According to the excellence of his land,
He prepared goodly statues.
2. Their heart is divided,
Now shall they be punished;
He will cut off their altars,
And He will destroy their statutes.

1.—*Israel is.*—The wickedness which manifested itself into idolatry, etc., is here traced to the abuse of the prosperity which God had conferred on the Israelites. Instead of spending the bounties of providence for the glory of God, they appropriated them to idolatrous uses, and that in proportion to the abundance of their bestowal.—*A luxuriant vine.*—The verb "bakak" is here used to express the *luxuriance* of the vine, and not, as in the A. V., and some others, its *unfruitfulness.*—The idea of *emptying*, which the verb also has, derived from that of *pouring out entirely* the contents of a vessel, does not suit the present connection.—*Whose fruit is very abundant.*—Considering "gephen" *the vine*, the nominative of the verb, which signifies "whose fruit was equal," *i.e.*, to its flourishing state, the sense is given, if not the idiom, as the next clause explains.—*According to the abundance.*—The more prosperity God bestowed upon them, the more they abused His gifts, referring them to their idols; the more God lavished His mercies on them, the more profuse they were in the adoration of their idols.

2.—*Their heart is divided.*—"Chalak" is here to be taken intransitively, and refers to their insincerity in the service of God, professing to worship Him, while they were likewise addicted to the worship of idols. So Elijah upbraided them: "How long halt ye between the two opinions" (I Kings xviii., v. 21). Thus Tanchum: "Their mind and their understanding, and their opinion are divided, while they associate others with God." The rendering "to be smooth," which some propose, must be rejected, on the ground that, though the verb "chalak" is used in this signification of the *tongue*, it nowhere is of the *heart.*—*Now.*—In this and the following verse, "now" has the signification of *soon, speedily.*—*He will.*—God is here said to do, what He would effect by means of the Assyrians.—*Cut off.*—"'Araph" properly signifies *to cut off the head of a victim, by striking it on the neck.* It is here, with much force, used metonymically, in application to the destruction of the altars on which the animals were offered. Ewald: "Er wird ihre Altäre enthaupten;" *He will decapitate their altars.*

3. Surely now they shall say:
"We have no king,
"Because we feared not the Lord:
"What then shall a king do for us?"
4. They utter empty speeches;
Swearing falsely, making covenants:
Therefore, judgment blossoms like the poppy
On the ridges of the field.
5. For the calves of Beth-aven,
The inhabitants of Samaria shall be in fear;
The people thereof shall mourn for it—
And the priests that exulted in it—
Because its glory is departed from it.

3.—*Now they shall say.*—The language of desperation is here put into the mouth of the apostate Israelites, at the time of the infliction of Divine judgment. Their king, to whom they had naturally looked for protection, was removed; they had forfeited the favour of God, who was now become their enemy; and, therefore, it was vain to expect help from an earthly monarch. Some think the Prophet refers to the time of anarchy during the interregnum, between the murder of Pekah, and the accession of Hoshea.

4.—*Swearing falsely.*—The Prophet begins with the finite form of the verb, and then, for the sake of more specific description, changes it for the infinitive.—*Making covenants.*—"B'rith," *covenant*, is here used as a collective noun, and is to be rendered in the plural. Whether the false swearing and the entering into covenants refers to the conduct of the Israelites in regard to each other, or in reference to foreign powers, has been much disputed. The latter, however, would seem more probable, since it is the *making* of covenants, and not the *breaking* of them, of which the Prophet speaks as something criminal. He seems to have in his eye the historical circumstances narrated II Kings xvii., v. 4.—*Therefore judgment.*—By "mishpat" is meant the Divine judgment, which was to be inflicted upon the people of Israel. So Rashi.—*Blossoms like the poppy.*—He compares it to the rapid and luxuriant growth of the poppy, which overruns the fields, and is destructive as a poison. Celsius, in his Hierobot. supports the the common rendering *hemlock*, as the signification of "rosh;" but that of *poppy*, proposed by Gesenius, is preferable, both to such construction of the term, and to that of *colocynth* advanced by Oedmann, or that of *lolium* or *darnel* suggested by Michaelis.—*On the ridges.*—"Telamim" rather signify the ridges between the furrows than the *furrows* themselves. See Pococke.

5.—*For the calves of Beth-aven.*—Here, and in the next verse, the object of idolatrous worship is spoken of, now in the plural, and now in the singular number, which Hitzig accounts for on the ground, that though the Israelites might have multiplied golden calves, that set up by Jeroboam would still be held in peculiar honour. Four MSS. have

6. It shall itself also be carried to Assyria,
   A present to King Jareb:
   Ephraim shall receive shame,
   And Israel shall blush for his own counsel.
7. As for Samaria, her king is cut off,

"Eglath," *calf*, in the singular, which is also the reading of the Sept. and Syr. This reading is very uncritically adopted by Kuinoel, Dathe, Newcome, Fuerstenthal, and some other moderns. For Beth-aven see on ch. iv., v. 15.—*The people thereof.*—Those devoted to its worship.—*And the priests.*—"Kemarim" is only used in Hebrew to designate *idolatrous priests*, and occurs but twice besides, viz., II Kings xxiii., v. 5; Zech. i., v. 4; but in the Syriac "kumro," signifies a priest of the true God, as well as one engaged in the service of idols. Gesenius derives the noun from "Kamar" *to burn, be scorched, black*, supposing the reference to be to the black dress of monks or ecclesiastics; but this seems too modern to be entitled to adoption, Some think the Lat. *camillus*, an inferior order of priest, who attended upon and assisted the flamens, is derived from this root. Ewald and Fuerstenthal render the word by *Pfaffen*, which is used of priests by way of contempt, in German.—*That exulted in it.*—Henderson renders: "The priests thereof shall *leap about*," and says: "Such would be the excitement of the idolatrous priests at the capture of their God, that they would leap about in a state of desperation, like those of Baal (I Kings xviii., v. 26). Fuerstenthal renders: "Und seine Pfaffen *beben* seinethalben," and explains it by: "they shall roll themselves in the dust like mourners." deriving the verb "yagilu" from "galal," *to roll* (Gen. xxix., v. 10). Houbigant proposes to read: "Yalilu:" viz, "And the priests *shall howl* over it;" but it is not supported by any Hebrew MS. Calmet and Dimock propose to read: "Yachilu," "the priests which trusted in it." The *exigentia loci* requires some different word in the original.—*Its glory.*—The *glory* of the idol consisted in its ornaments, wealth, etc.

6.—*It shall itself.*—Not Israel only shall be carried into captivity, but its god also. The victory over a nation was accounted of old a victory over its gods, as indeed it showed their impotence.—*To king Jareb.*—See note on ch. v., v. 13.—*Shall receive shame.*—The worshippers of the golden calf would be ashamed of him, when they found that, instead of protecting them, he was himself carried into captivity. That "boshnah" is not to be changed into "beshenah" and rendered *in a sound sleep*, as Horsley does, nor into "bashanah," *in this year*, with Michaelis, the parallelism sufficiently shows.

7.—*As for Samaria.*—For the sake of emphasis, "Shomron" is put absolutely. The phrase is equivalent to *the king of Samaria*, etc.—*As a chip.*—The Hebrew word "ketzeph" has nowhere the signification of *foam* or *scum*.—It signifies any *chip* or small fragment of wood. Compare Joel i., v. 7. The comparison of the king to a small chip of wood, which cannot resist the force of the current, is beautiful and forcible. *Spuma*, which is the rendering of the Targum, Jerome, Symm., Abulwalid, Tanchum, and many moderns, is less apt, even if it could be philologically sustained.

As a chip upon the surface of the water.
8. The high places also of Aven—
The sin of Israel—shall be destroyed;
Thorns and thistles shall grow upon their altars;
They shall then say to the mountains: "Cover us!"
And to the hills: "Fall upon us!"
9. Since the days of Gibeah,
Thou hast sinned, O Israel!
There they stood:
Shall not the war against the sons of iniquity
Overtake them in Gibeah?
10. My desire is to punish them,

8.—*Of Aven.*—An abbreviation of the full form *Beth-aven*, or Beth-el.—*The sin.*—The *occasion of sin* to Israel. See verse 10.—*Thorns.*—"Kotz," which may possibly denote the *ononis spinosa*, or rest-harrow, a papilionaceous shrub of a thorny nature; and which like the "dardar," or *thistle*, is in some places a great foe to the farmer. Here it is represented as overgrowing the altar, to intimate the ruinous and neglected state of that idolatrous worship whereby Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, made Israel to sin.—*They shall then say to the mountains*: "*cover us.*"—Samaria and Bethel, the seats of the idolatry and of the kingdom of Israel, themselves both on heights, had both near them mountains higher than themselves. Such was to Bethel, the mountain on the East, where Abram built an altar to the Lord (Gen. xii., v. 8); Samaria was encircled by them. Both were probably scenes of their idolatries; from both, the miseries of the dwellers of Bethel and Samaria could be seen. The high hills round Samaria, when the tide of war had filled the valley around it, hemmed them in. There was no way, either to break through or escape. One only service could it seem that their mountains could then render, to destroy them. So they should escape the gaze of men upon their misery.

9.—*Since the days of Gibeah.*—See ch. ix., v. 6. The Prophet declares, that as a nation, his people had all along, from the period referred to, evinced a disposition to act in the same rebellious manner as the Gibeonites had done.—*There they stood.*—In *Gibeah* they were avengers of the sacredness of God's law. But *now*, none of the ten tribes took the side of God. Neither zeal for God, nor the greatness of the guilt, nor fear of judgment, nor the peril of utter ruin, induced any to set themselves against sin so great.—*Shall not the war.*—The tribe of Benjamin was *then* reduced to six hundred men, yet the tribe survived and flourished again; *now* the kingdom of the ten tribes should be utterly destroyed.

10.—*My desire is.*—The Sept. reads: "*I came* and chastised them," and of this reading Houbigant, Dimock, Newcome, Tingstadius, and Boothroyd approve, and adopt it as an emendation; but contrary to all other authority, ancient or modern, and without necessity. The

And nations shall be gathered against them,
When I chastise them for their two iniquities.

11. Ephraim is a well-trained heifer,
Loving to thresh;
But I will pass on beside her fair neck;
I will place a rider on Ephraim;
Judah shall plough,
And Jacob shall break the clods.

"Beth" prefixed in the *Beth Essentiae*, indicating the substantive character of the affection.—"Ivvah," *to be strongly propense, desire greatly*, expresses the irresistible inclination of infinite purity to punish sin.—*For their two iniquities.*—The original has occasioned great variety of interpretation. Michaelis translates it *plough-shares*, attempting to derive it from the Arabic. Rashi, and among the moderns, Ewald, render *eyes*, "before their two *eyes*." *i.e.*, openly; but the word is always written, "enayim" when applied to *real eyes*. and only "'Ajanoth" when applied to *fountains*, or *artificial eyes*. Some translate *habitations*; but most, *furrows*, which is the rendering adopted by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Abulwalid, Tanchum, Munster, Fuerstenthal, and others. The only satisfactory exegesis is that founded on the "Keri," *for their two iniquities, i.e.*, the two golden calves which Jeroboam had erected, and which proved the source of all the evils which they had afterwards committed. They had many other idols, but these were the principal; and they are called *iniquities* by a metonymy of the cause for the effect. Compare verse 8, where "Chattos," *sin*, is similarly applied.

11.—*A well-trained heifer.*—The meaning of this verse seems to be, that the Ephraimites has been accustomed in the plenitude of their power to crush and oppress others, especially their brethren of the two tribes; but they were now themselves to be brought into subjection to the king of Assyria, by whom they should be placed in circumstances of great hardship in foreign countries.—*Loving to thresh.*—Corn was threshed in the East chiefly by means of oxen, who were either driven round and round, so as to trample it out with their feet, or drew a cylinder armed with iron, or harrow-shaped planks, set with sharp stones, which at the same time cut up the straw for provender.—*Pass on beside her fair neck.*—As the driver does beside an ox in the yoke, thus God would, in his providence, lead forth the Israelites, from the midst of their prosperity, to the toils and hardships of captivity.—*I will place a rider.*—Lit.: *I will cause to ride Ephraim*, meaning I will place a rider upon him—a conqueror, who shall lead him forth from his land. Thus Rosenmüller and Ewald. The judgments of God were not, however, to the northern kingdom: the southern should also be involved in them. They should overtake the whole posterity of Jacob—*Judah shall plough, and Jacob shall break the clods.*—It seems probable that the custom here alluded to is similar to that which still continues in Persia. There, as fast as the ground is turned up, men break the clods with large wooden mallets, and also employ a small harrow, assisted by the spade, to

12. Sow to yourselves for righteousness;
Reap according to piety;
Break up for yourselves the fallow ground:
For it is time to seek the Lord,
Till He come, and teach you righteousness.
13. Ye have ploughed wickedness,
Ye have reaped iniquity;
Ye have eaten the fruit of falsehood:

level the furrows, and to ridge between them. It has, however, been doubted whether any harrow was used by the Hebrews, whose operations after ploughing may seem to have consisted in breaking the clods, and covering the seed, when sown, by cross furrows. This was an ancient custom, and still prevails in Palestine, where also, when the soil is sandy, they often sow without previous ploughing, and afterwards plough down the seed. I still, however, think the Persian method was at least sometimes used, for it not only agrees with the Scriptural intimations, but coincides with the notice which Pliny takes of the process in use among the ancient Syrians.

12.—*Sow to yourselves.*—Continuing his agricultural metaphors, the Prophet here abruptly calls upon the nation to reform its manners. —*For righteousness.*—The "lamed" in "litzdakah" points out the end or object to be obtained by sowing. "Sow what will produce the fruits of righteousness."—*Reap.*—This is equivalent to the subjunctive, "Sow, so that ye may reap."—*For it is time.*—The Israelites had long neglected the Lord; it was now high time to return to His fear.—*Till He come.*—Though they might not meet with immediate tokens of His favour, they were to persevere in seeking Him, in the assurance that He would be gracious to them.—*And teach you righteousness.*—Not as the Authorised Version: "And rain righteousness upon you." My rendering is supported by the Syr.: "Till He come and show to you His righteousness;" Pococke's Arab. MS.: "Till He come and guide you to righteousness;" the Targum: "Now He shall be revealed, and shall bring righteousness to you;" Kimchi, who remarks: "If ye seek the Lord, to know His law and His commandments, He will come and teach you righteousness." Aben Ezra asserts the same, in nearly the same words.

13.—*Ye have ploughed.*—Instead of following such a course as that to what they had just been exhorted, the Israelites had pursued one directly opposite, and now reaped the disastrous consequences.—*Reaped iniquity.*—The *punishment* due to your iniquity.—*Fruit of falsehood.*—The effects of their false and hypocritical conduct in professing attachment to the true God, while they addicted themselves to the worship of other deities.—*In thy way.*—The Sept.: "In thy *chariots*;" and Kuinoel has actually adopted it in his Hebrew text. It is, however, unsupported by any Hebrew MS., and is to be rejected. The *way* of the Israelites was the wicked course of conduct which they had adopted in opposition to the will of God. Kimchi's comment: "The way of wickedness and bad religion."

Because thou hast trusted in thy way,
In the multitude of thy mighty men.
14. Therefore, a tumult shall arise among the people,
And all thy fortresses shall be destroyed,
As Shalman destroyed Beth-arbel in the day of battle:
When the mother was dashed in pieces with her children.
15. So shall He act towards you at Bethel,

14.—*A tumult shall arise.*—The Prophet now denounces a severe *threatening* against the rebellious nation, foreshowing that they should be involved in all the horrors of war.—*Shalman.*—*Beth-arbel.*—It is now universally admitted that both are proper names. The best interpretation of them is given by Tanchum: "As for *Shalman*, it is a proper name, and is said to stand for *Shalmanassar*, king of Assyria, only it is abbreviated; and perhaps *Shalmanassar* is compounded of two names, one of which is omitted because it was well known: and *Arbel* is the name of a city, and is said to be that which is called *Arbel* at the present day." The abbreviation of proper names is not uncommon in Scripture, as *Coniah* for *Jehoiachin*, etc. It was this monarch that besieged Samaria for the space of three years, and took it in the ninth of Hoshea, carrying the king and most of his subjects into exile (II Kings xvii., vv. 1-6).—To this interpretation it has been objected that our Prophet wrote before the time of Shalmaneser, and, therefore, could not speak of his destroying Arbel as something that had already happened. It must, however, be recollected, that though Hoshea prophesied before the time of that king, he continued to deliver his predictions as far down as the time of his successor Sennacherib, and must, therefore, have been well acquainted with the previous Assyrian invasion. With respect to *Beth-arbel*, commentators are divided in opinion. Some think that the Assyrian city *Arbela*, situated between the Lycus and the Tigris, celebrated for the victory obtained there by Alexander the Great over Darius, is meant: but it is far more probable thet the Prophet refers to the *Arbela* of I Macc. ix., v. 2, which Josephus places near Sephoris in Galilee; Eusebius, in the plain of Esdraelon. Of the battle here mentioned, no account indeed is given either in sacred or profane history; but as the contemporaries of Hoshea are supposed to have been acquainted with it, there is reason to believe it took place on the invasion of the the kingdom of Israel by the Assyrian army. The ancient versions of this clause of the verse are more or less at fault; but have afforded abundant scope for the exercise of emendatorial criticism. See Newcome, who renders: "*Like the destruction of Zalmunna by the hand of Jerubbaal*," and supposes the reference to be to Judg. viii.—*With her children.*—"'Al," here signifies *with*, in the sense of being superadded. See Gen. xxviii., v. 9; xxxi., v. 50.

15.—*So shall He act—at Bethel.*—The nominative to "'Asah" is "God" (understood), but *not* Bethel, as in the Authorised Version,

On account of your flagrant wickedness:
In the morning shall the king of Israel be utterly cut off.

CHAPTER XI.

1. When Israel was a child, I loved him,
   And from Egypt I called him my son.
2. As they called them, so they went from them;
   They sacrificed unto Baals,
   And burned incense unto graven images.
3. Though I have given Ephraim a leader,

The words contain a special prediction against Bethel, where the wickedness of the Israelites had been most conspicuously exhibited. —*Flagrant wickedness.*—Literally: "The wickedness of your wickedness," *i.e.*, your excessive, or most flagrant wickedness. A rare example of a noun put in construction with itself repeated in the singular, in order to form the superlative degree. There is no necessity, with Newcome, to resort to emendations.—*In the morning.* —Several MSS., the edition of Soncino, 1486, and the Venet. edition of 1518, read: "Kashachar," *like* the morning. Were the following verb "damah" to be taken in the sense of *resembling, being like*, etc.; the latter reading might possess some claims on our attention; but as the idea of *being destroyed* best comports with the connection, that of the *Textus Receptus* is preferable. The reference is to the suddenness with which Hoshea was to be seized by the king of Assyria, and an end put to the regal dignity. The doing of anything *early* or *soon* is frequently expressed by its being done *in the morning*.

1.—*And from Egypt.*—That these words relate to the *nation of Israel*, being a description of what God had done for it ages before the Prophet wrote, and not a *prophecy of any future event*, is so evident, that no person, who impartially examines the preceding and following context, can for a moment call it into question. See Exodus iv., vv. 22-23. "Israel is my son, even my first born; let my son go that he may serve me."—The early period of their existence is frequently represented as their youth. See Isa. liv., v. 13; Jer. ii., v. 2; iii., vv. 24-25; xxii., v. 21; Hosh. ii., v. 15.

2.—*As they called them.*—Whether God employed judges, priests, or prophets to call them, it was all one. Whenever or by whomsoever they were called, they turned away in the opposite direction, to serve their idols. The use of the verb "kara" *to call*, in the preceding verse, suggested the idea of the subsequent messages which had been delivered to the Israelites by the Prophets, to which Hoshea now appeals, in order to contrast with the means which had been employed for their reformation, the obstinate character of their rebellion.

3.—*I have given Ephraim a leader.*—So nearly all Jewish commentators. The leader was Moses.—*Who took them.*—See Numb. xi., v. 12,

Who took them upon his arms;
Yet they knew not that I healed them.
4. With human cords I drew them;
With bands of love;
And I was to them as those
Who lift up the yoke from their neck,
And I held out meat to them.
5. They should not return to the land of Egypt;
But now the Assyrian is their king;
Because they refused to repent.
6. And the sword shall be whirled in their cities;
It shall destroy their chiefs, and devour them,
Because of their devices.

—*That I healed them.*—This refers to His recovering them from the calamities which they brought upon themselves by their sins.

4.—*With human cords.*—They were drawn by such ties of reason and affection, as those by which man acts upon and induces his children and fellow men; as contrasted with those bands of force and compulsion by which he constrains the brute creatures subject to him, but to their reason and affection he can make no appeal. It is observable that it is still a popular expression in the East to describe as "the bands of love" the ties which bind a child to its parent, or a wife to her husband.—*Who lift up the yoke.*—Raise it from the neck and cheeks of the animals, so as to allow it freely to eat its food. This better suits the following connection than the idea of taking the yoke off any place that may have been galled by it, in order to afford relief. The "yoke" not only included the piece of wood upon the neck, by which the animal was fastened to the pole, but also the whole of the harness about the head, which was connected with it. The yokes used in the East are very heavy, and press so much upon the animals, that they are unable to bend their necks.—*And I held out.*—"At," the apocopated future in Hiphil of "natah," *to stretch out, extend, reach anything* to another.—The verse sets forth the kind relief afforded to the Hebrew nation in Egypt, and the provision with which they were miraculously supplied in the wilderness.

5.—*They should not return.*—I have brought them thence with the design, that the nation should never return thither again (see Exodus xiv., v. 14); but as they have sinned, and forfeited my favour and protection, they shall go to Assyria, because they refused to repent. This view of the verse removes every difficulty. Boothroyd, following the Sept., alters "lo" *not*, into "lo" *to him*, adds it to the preceding verse, and renders: "*They shall return* to the land of Egypt."

6.—*Shall be whirled.*—Most Jewish and Christian commentators take the verb "Chul" in the sense of *resting, remaining*: but it seems preferable to adopt the signification *to turn, be turned*, or *whirled about*, as a sword when it is brandished, or when it is employed in

7. For my people persist in backsliding from me;
Though they call them to the Most High,
Yet none of them will exalt Him.
8. How shall I give thee up, O Ephraim?
How shall I deliver thee up, O Israel?

cutting down the enemy. Israel was agitated with external and intestine wars from the time of Jeroboam the second. Although Zechariah his son reigned twelve years, yet it was in continued troubles; and he was at last slain by the rebel Shallum, who, having reigned one month, was slain by Menahem. Pehahiah succeeded his father Menahem, and reigned two years, and was killed by Pekah, son of Remaliah. He joined Rezin, king of Assyria, and made an irruption into the land of Judah: but Ahaz having obtained succour from Tiglathpileser, Pekah was defeated, and the tribes of Rueben, Gad, Naphtali, and half the tribe of Manasseh, were carried away captives by the Assyrian king; and in a short time after, Hoshea, son of Elah, slew Pekah, and usurped the kingdom, which he could not possess without the assistance of Shalmaneser, who for his services levied a tribute on the Israelitish king. Wishing to rid himself of this yoke, he applied to the king of Egypt;—but this being known to Shalmaneser, he came against Samaria; and after a three years' siege took, and destroyed it. Thus *the sword was whirled in the cities.—Their chiefs.*—Gesenius and Lee take "baddim" metaphorically, denoting *chiefs* or *princes.* Henderson: "barriers." Horsley: "their diviners." Boothroyd: "their lying prophets." Rashi: "their mighty men." Fuerstenthal the same.

7.—*Persist in backsliding.*—The idea of *doubt* or *suspense*, which some attach to the word in this connection, ill agrees with the character of the Israelites as otherwise depicted in this book. "Meshuvah" is always used in a bad sense, *defection, apostasy*, etc. Comp. ch. xiv., v. 5. The suffix in "meshuvasi" is to be taken passively; *defection which has me for its object*, and cannot with any propriety be rendered as by Horsley: "my returning."—*Though they call them to the Most High.*—Though the Prophet's call upon the Israelites to return to the Lord, and to abandon their idolatrous worship.—*Yet none of them will exalt Him.*—None of them were inclined to reject their idols, and to celebrate His praise, as the sole and glorious object of adoration. Boothroyd renders: "Though because of the yoke they call together, it shall not be raised from off their neck." Newcome: "And though they call on Him because of the yoke, He will not raise it." Though there is some difficulty in the original, yet such renderings can never be borne out by the text.—"Yachad" with the *negative* is to be rendered *not one, none*; without it, *all, altogether, wholly*, as in the following verse.

8.—We have here one of the most affecting instances of the infinite tenderness of the Divine compassion to be found in Scripture; the point of which is enhanced by its being introduced immediately after a description of the odious conduct of the Israelites. It is, as Bishop Lowth characterises it, exquisitely pathetic. The repetitions

How shall I make thee as Admah?
How shall I subvert thee as Zeboim?
My heart is turned within me;
All my feelings of compassion are kindled.
9. I will not execute the fierceness of my anger;
I will no more destroy Ephraim;
For I am God and not man;
The Holy One is in the midst of thee;
I will not come in wrath.—

and synonymous features of the parallelism greatly add to the effect. The words belong to the period after the subjugation of Samaria, and the carrying away of the Israelites by Shalmaneser (II Kings xvii., vv. 5-6; xviii., vv. 9-12). They were designed to inspire the captives with hope in the mercy of God, and thus lead them to true repentance. The destruction of Admah and Zeboim is only referred to as an example in one other case, viz., Deut. xxix., v. 23, and then in connection with Sodom and Gomorrah. To the awful catastrophe recorded Gen. xix., the sacred writers frequently appeal, in order to produce a sense of the evil of sin, and the severity with which it deserves to be punished, or when they would convey the idea of complete and irretrievable ruin. Comp. Isa. i., v. 9; xiii., v. 19; Jer. xlix., v. 18; Lam. iv., v. 6; Amos iv., v. 11.—*My heart is turned within me.*—Some would render: "My heart is turned *against* me," *i.e.*, my pity rises in overpowering opposition to the determination to which I had come to inflict punishments; but the phraseology will scarcely bear such construction, though it cannot be questioned, that it is designed to express a powerful inward revolution. Comp. Psa. xlii., v. 6; xliii., v. 5; cxliii., v. 4; Jer. viii., v. 11; in all which passages the preposition conveys the idea of mental *contiguity, nearness, in, within,* as Lam. i., v. 20: "My heart is turned *within* me" incontestably shews.—*All my feelings of compassion are kindled.*—"Kamar" is used in Niphal of *the stirrings of natural affection* (Gen. xliii., v. 30; I Kings iii., v. 26). The idea seems to be derived from the commotion produced by the kindling of a fire, and the heat or warmth in which it results.

9.—*I will not execute.*—This verse contains a declaration of the purpose of God founded upon His compassion, and quite in keeping with the manner in which expression had just been given to it.—*I am God.*—And am not affected by human caprices.—*I will not come in wrath.*—The rendering: "I will not enter into the city" affords no suitable sense, and would require the article, "ba'ir," as indeed one of De Rossi's MSS. reads. Bishop Lowth's translation (Lectures, vol. ii., p. 38) "though I inhabit not thy cities" is equally unsatisfactory with the interpretation of Jerome and Castalio: I am not like those who dwell in cities; living after human laws, and deeming cruelty to be justice. Such construction Maurer states to be in his opinion "Artificiosior quam elegantior." I, therefore, adopt the interpretation hinted at by Rashi, and since approved by Schroeder, Secker,

10. They shall follow the Lord,
When He roareth like a lion;
When He roareth,
The children shall hasten from the West.
11. They shall hasten like a sparrow from Egypt,
And, like a dove, from the land of Assyria:
And I will cause them to dwell in their own houses,
Saith the Lord.

Dathe, Manger, Tingstadius, Eichhorn, De Wette, Noyes, Boothroyd, Gesenius, Maurer, and Ewald, which takes "'ir" not in the sense of *city* but of *anger*, or *wrath*. Comp. Jer. xv., v. 8; and "'or," *an enemy*, I Sam. xxviii., v. 16; Ps. cxxxix., v. 20. The words are thus strictly parallel, and synonymous to "v'lo ish," *and not man*.

10-11.—These verses contain gracious promises of the return of the Israelites to the true worship and service of God, and their restoration to their own land from the different places in which they had been scattered during the captivity. "To follow" or "to walk after the Lord," is always used in the religious sense of addicting oneself to His worship, and keeping His commandments, and is not to be interpreted, as Hitzig does, of a mere following of providence by taking advantage of the opportunity that would be afforded of returning from Babylon. So the Targum: "After the worship of God." For the contrary see verse 2.—*When He roareth.*—As "Shaag" *to roar*, like the lion, always conveys the idea of terror or awe, it must refer to the awful judgments which God executed upon Babylon, Egypt, etc., through the instrumentality of Cyrus and his successors; thereby opening the way for the liberation of the Israelites who were found in these countries. Comp. Isa. xxxi., v. 4; Jer. xxv., v. 30; Joel iv., v. 16; Amos i., v. 2; iii., v. 8.—*The children.*—The Israelites, who had been for a time rejected, but were again acknowledged in that character, because they were to be reinstated in the privileges of adoption. Comp. ch. i., v. 10.—*Shall hasten.*—"Chared" is here pregnant with meaning—signifying to come or hasten under the influence of great agitation. The idea of trepidation, though implied, and connecting well with that of the roaring previously mentioned, is not so prominent as that of quick and nimble motion. Excited to the utmost by the revolutions of empires, which allowed them to take possession of their native country, they would use all haste in repairing thither.

12.—*They shall hasten like a sparrow.*—The same idea of velocity is further carried out by comparing the return of the Israelites to the flight of birds remarkable for their swiftness. "Tzippor" is here used not in its generic sense of *bird*, but specially of the *sparrow*, as the use of "jonah," *dove*, immediately after, shows.—*In their own houses.*—The use of the word "'al" *upon* their houses, seems to have special reference to the custom of the Orientals, who enjoy their time *upon*, rather than *in* their houses.

CHAPTER XII.

1. Ephraim hath encompassed me with falsehood,
   And the house of Israel with deceit;
   But Judah as yet ruleth with God,
   And is faithful to the Holy One.
2. Ephraim feedeth upon wind,
   And pursueth the east wind;

1.—The Sept., Vulg., Targum, and the Authorised Version join this verse to the preceding chapter; but improperly—there being no connection whatever with the previous verses, whereas it is manifest from the renewed reference to Judah, verse 3, that the three verses intimately cohere.—*But Judah as yet ruleth with God.*—Ephraim had cast off the rule of God, the kings and priests whom He had appointed, so that His whole kingdom and polity was without God and against Him. In contrast with this, Judah, amid all his sins, was outwardly faithful. He maintained the worship of God. So Abyah said to Jeroboam: "The Lord is our God, and Him we have not forsaken; and the priests, who minister unto the Lord, are the children of Aaron, and the Levites perform their business . . . . For we keep the charge of the Lord, our God, but ye have forsaken Him," etc. (II Chron. xiii., vv. 10-12). Henderson, however, renders: "And as for Judah, he is still inconstant with God, even with the faithful Holy Ones." He remarks that Judah, or the inhabitants of the southern kingdom, acted with vacillancy in regard to God, and that the description applies to the state of things among the Jews towards the end of the reign of Jotham, and during that of Ahaz, who introduced a Syrian altar, and other idolatrous objects, by which the people were tempted to infidelity towards God, but had not yet altogether renounced His service. This interpretation seems to be favoured by verse 3. However, his rendering: "even with the faithful Holy Ones," is not in accordance with the Hebrew grammar. As it is in the original, "faithful" refers to *Judah*, not to *God*. Sharpe renders: "And Judah yet acteth disobediently towards God, even toward the the Most Holy and Faithful One." Bishop Newcome, most singularly: "But hereafter they shall come down a people of God; even a faithful people of saints."

2.—*Feedeth upon wind—pursueth the east wind.*—By "wind" and "east wind" are meant empty, unsatisfying, and pernicious objects. Such were the idolatrous confidence and foreign alliances of the Israelites.—The *east wind* in Palestine, coming from Arabia, and the far East, over large tracts and sandy wastes, is parching, scorching, destructive to vegetation, oppressive to man, violent and destructive on the sea, and by land also, having the force of the whirlwind. See Job xxvii., v. 21.—*Oil is carried into Egypt.*—When the Hebrews wanted to pay their court to the Egyptians, they could hardly transmit a more acceptable offering than a quantity of the excellent olive oil

He daily multiplieth falsehood and violence;
Yea, they make a covenant with Assyria,
And oil is carried into Egypt.

3. But the Lord hath also a controversy with Judah;
And He will punish Jacob according to his ways,
According to his doings, He will recompense him.

4. In the womb he took his brother by the heel,
And by his strength he strove with an angel.

which their country produced in such abundance and perfection. The present inhabitants of Egypt consume as much oil, perhaps, as any people. It is used not only for lamps, but with food. But as Egypt is not a country of the olive, the Egyptians, although they value highly its oil, are obliged for the most part to content themselves with inferior vegetable oils, less palatable to the taste with food, and burning less brightly and smelling disagreeably in lamps. If this was the case anciently, as no doubt it was, we may find a good reason for the sending of oil to Egypt. It is evidently regarded as a criminal act; and that criminality is usually supposed to consist in its being offered as a bribe to Pharaoh, to induce him to render that assistance which the Hebrews should not have sought. But as much oil was consumed in honour of idols, Harmer conjectures, that the Jews are considered culpable in sending oil to Egypt, with the knowledge that it would be, and with the intention that it should be, thus employed.

3.—"Judah" and "Jacob" stand for the two kingdoms respectively, the latter name denoting the ten tribes, as in Isa. xvii., v. 4. As the guilt of Judah was not open apostasy, the language in reference to that power is not so strong as that which is employed respecting Israel.

4.—Having introduced the name of Jacob in reference to his posterity, Hoshea adverts to their interesting incidents in his personal history, with the view of encouraging his countrymen to apply themselves with all assiduity to the service of God, who alone could, and would extricate them from the calamitous circumstances into which their sins had brought them. Though "'Akeb," from which the name of "Jacob" is derived, signifies to come *behind any one, take him by the heel*, etc., it is obviously used here in a good sense, to denote the supernatural indication which his taking his brother Esau by the heel afforded of the superiority, which, in the course of Divine providence, he and his posterity were to obtain (Gen. xxv., vv. 22, 23, 26). To this effect the Targum: "Was it not said of Jacob, before he was born, that he should be greater than his brother?" The Israelites were reminded of the promise, "The one people shall be stronger than the other people;" and had they acted on the faith of it, they would have found that, with God on their side, they were not only stronger than the Edomites, but even than the Assyrian power itself.

5. Yea, he strove with an angel, and prevailed;
   He wept, and made supplication unto him;
   In Bethel should he find him;
   And there He will speak with us;
6. For it is the Lord God of hosts,
   The Lord is his memorial.

5.—*He strove with an angel.*.—The idea of *power* having thus been suggested in the mind of the Prophet, he was reminded of the remarkable occurrence which took place at Peniel, when Jacob wrestled with the Divine messenger, and prevailed. "Sarah," *to put forth power, exercise rule as a prince*, or *commander*, the verb from which "Israel," the other name of Jacob, is derived, is that employed, Gen. xxxii., v. 29, where the language is nearly identical with that used in these two verses.—*He wept.*—Of the circumstances of his weeping and making supplication, no particular mention is made in Genesis, but they may be regarded as implied in the words: "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." The struggle was not merely corporeal, it was also mental. The outward conflict was only a sign of that which was internal and spiritual. The Prophet, as in the former reference, leaves the Israelites to make the application. If they would only redeem their character, as descendants of Israel, and show that they were entitled to the name, by sincerely and earnestly engaging in supplication to the God of their ancestor, they too should prevail, and obtain every necessary blessings.—*In Bethel.*—The third reference is to the narrative (Gen. xxviii., vv. 11-22), which contains an account of the scene at Bethel, and the promises which God then made, not to the patriarch only, but also to his posterity. "Bethel," is here the accusative of place, and is used with singular effect, in reference to the contrasted appropriation of it by the Patriarch, and by his apostate posterity. The Sept., not perceiving this, have rendered it: "the house of On," as elsewhere in this book. —*He will speak with us.*—Aq., Symm., Theod., Syr., Tanchum, Abulwalid, and several moderns, render as if it were "immo" *with him*; Sept.: "to them." Ewald, following Kimchi, renders: "he will speak with us;" and so have I translated. The Prophet here undoubtedly announces that God would renew his communications at Bethel, provided the Israelites returned to obedience. For it cannot be denied that his design in the adduction of this instance was to lead his people to repentance, in order that they might inherit the promised blessings.

6.—*For it is the Lord God.*—The incommunicable name is here introduced for the express purpose of showing that He who had made promises respecting the posterity of Jacob, would not prove unfaithful to His word. While "the God of hosts," conveys the idea of supreme and infinite power, by which He is able to carry all His purposes into effect, the *incommunicable name* conveys that of *immutable constancy* and, by implication, fidelity to His promises. The incommunicable name is derived from "hayah," *he was*, "hoveh," *he is*, and "yihyeh," *he will be*; and accordingly, the second article of the Jewish creed

7. Therefore, return thou to thy God;
Observe mercy and justice,
And wait continually on thy God.
8. But like a merchant,
With deceitful balances in his hand,
Loving to overreach,
9. Ephraim saith: "Surely I am rich,
"I have acquired wealth;
"It is all through my labours;
"They will find no iniquity in me, that were sin."
10. Yet, I, the Lord, thy God from the land of Egypt,

concludes with the words: "He alone is our God; HE WAS, HE IS, and HE SHALL BE." Whether the incommunicable name was in use before the time of Moses, has been, and still is, a matter of dispute. That the Patriarchs were unacquainted with it, has been concluded from Exod. vi., v. 3, where God declares, that the name under which He revaled Himself to them was "El Shaddai," GOD ALMIGHTY; but that He was not known to them by His *incommunicable name*. Since, however, we meet with this name not only in the history of the Patriarchs, but also expressly employed by themselves, as in Gen. xv., v. 2; xvi., v. 2; xxii., v. 14; xxvii., v. 7: xxviii., vv. 20-21, etc., it seems undeniable that they were acquainted with it; so that what is meant by the words "He was not known to them by His incommunicable name," is, that God had not caused them *to experience the import* of his incommunicable name. See Dr. Pusey's note on this passage.

7.—*Therefore return thou.*—An exhortation to duty derived from what God had been, and would still, in accordance with the significant aspect of His name, in continuance be, to those who served Him in sincerity.

8.—*Like a merchant.*—Literally: "Canaan;" merchants being so called, because the Canaanites or Phœnicians were the then great merchant people. The Phœnicians were, in Homer's time, infamous for their griping in traffic. They are called *gnawers* and *money-lovers*.

9.—*I am rich.*—As if he said: "The only result of all this, with which the Prophets charge me, is that *I am become rich*; and since God thus prospers me, it is a sure proof that He is not displeased with me, and no iniquity can be found in me."—*They will find no iniquity.*—No fraudulent transactions for which I might be punished. "The merchant imagines it is not possible to get through business without some deceit; but he takes care not to commit any gross or deadly act of delinquency, hoping that God will not be strict in regard to the rest." MICHAELIS.

10.—*Yet, I, the Lord.*—Commentators have been greatly divided in opinion as to whether these words are to be taken as a *promise*, or as a *threatening*. Those who take the latter view (which I am also

I can yet make thee dwell in tents,
As in the days of antiquity.
11. I, who have spoken through the Prophets,
And have multiplied visions;
And have used similitudes through the Prophets.—
12. Verily Gilead is iniquitous;
Surely they are false;
In Gilgal they sacrifice oxen;
Their altars are like the heaps
On the ridges of the field.

inclined to adopt), interpret the living in tabernacles of such a life as those lead who have no settled habitations, like the Israelites in the wilderness. Henderson, who thinks that the words are to be taken as a promise, renders: "I will still cause thee to dwell in tents as on feast days;" and remarks: "Those who are familar with the sudden and abrupt transitions which abound in Hoshea, and the frequency with which he intermingles promises with threatenings, will not be surprised at this unexpected assurance of the Divine clemency. The argument is this: the Israelites have indeed acted a most wicked and deceitful part, and justly deserve to be for ever cast off from all participation in my favour; but I am still, what I have been from the the beginning of their history, their covenant-God, and will yet cause them to renew their joy before me." I, however, am still of opinion that the former exegesis better suits the connection.

11.—*Who have spoken.*—And have used every means, and employed every method to instruct you. I have sent prophets, exhorting, warning, and beseeching you, to return to Me. They have used similitudes, metaphors, allegories, etc., in order to fix your attention, and bring you back to your duty and interest. But, alas! you have not profited by my condescension.

12.—*Verily.*—"Im" is not used here as a particle expressing doubt; it rather expresses the certainty of what is affirmed, as "ach" following evidently shows. The two places here mentioned were celebrated in the history of the Hebrews:—*Gilead*, on account of the solemn agreement which Laban and Jacob entered into there with each other; and *Gilgal*, on account of the general circumcision of the people, and the solemn observance of the passover when they had passed over Jordan. They are adduced by the Prophet to remind the Israelities of the sacred obligations under which they lay, and the sacred character which, as the peculiar people of God, they ought even to sustain. Pointing, as it were, to the heap of stones which Jacob had erected in testimony of the transaction between him and Laban, Hoshea asks: "Is Gilead the scene of iniquity? Are its inhabitants actually worshippers of idols?" And then he fearlessly charges them with idolatry. For the wickedness of the Gileadites compare ch. vi., v. 8.—*Gilgal* had also become desecrated by idolatrous practices (see ch. iv., v. 15; ix., v. 15), which abounded to such ex-

13. And Jacob fled into the country of Syria;
And Israel served for a wife,
And for a wife he kept the flocks.
14. And by a Prophet the Lord brought
Israel out of Egypt;
And by a prophet he was guarded.

15. Ephraim hath given most bitter provocation:
Therefore, will his Lord leave his blood upon him,
And bring back upon him his reproach.

tent, that the numbers of the altars was like that of the heaps of stones which have been collected and left in various parts of the ridges of a field. Kimchi, however, gives a different interpretation to the passage. He says, the inhabitants of Gilead and Gilgal were neighbours, only the Jordan divided them from each other, hence the inhabitants of Gilgal imitated the idol-worship of their neighbours in Gilead. The Prophet therefore says: "*If Gilead were iniquitous* I would have suffered their evil doings, because *they were always* false. But why do they sacrifice bullocks for idols in Gilead, which belongs to the tribe of Judah? Why do *they* multiply their altars like the heaps on the ridges of the field?" Fuerstenthal adopts this view of the passage.

13.—The argument of both these verses is the same, though it is only in the latter that it is expressly stated, viz., the Divine goodness in preserving Jacob and his posterity. God was with the Patriarch, according to his promise, and protected and prospered him all the time he was in servitude in Padan-aram; and He likewise delivered his descendants from Egyptian bondage, and conducted them safely to the land of Canaan. "Aram" *Aramœa*, Syria, *the high country*, from "rum," *to be high*; here specially the region between the Euphrates and the Tigris, called, on this account "Aram Naharayim," *Aram of the two rivers*. Being lower than the rest of Syria on the west, it is here called "sadah," *field*, which corresponds to "paddan" *a level* or *plain* (Gen. xlviii., v. 7); hence Padan-aram. Critics complain of want of connection here. Houbigant suspects that the order is disturbed; and observes the want of connection, about which he thinks all the commentators unsatisfactory. Dimock proposes to insert both verses after verse 5.

14.—*And by a Prophet.*—Moses. The repeated reference to the Hebrew legislator in this character, was evidently intended to impress the minds of the Israelites with a conviction of the necessity of attending to the messages which the Lord sent to them by his Prophets.

15.—*Ephraim hath given.*—The object of provocation is not expressed, but that it is God, is clear from the following clause.—*His blood.*—The blood of Ephraim was, in all probability, that of human victims which had been shed in the service of Moloch.—

CHAPTER XIII.

1. When once Ephraim spoke, all trembled,
   So high was he exalted in Israel;
   But he offended through Baal, and died.
2. And now they continue to sin,
   And make for themselves molten images,

His reproach.—The disgraceful conduct of the ten tribes in abandoning the true God as unworthy of their service, and transferring it to idols. "Adonov" *his Lord*, is the nominative to "Yittosh," as well as to "Yashiv."

1.—*When once Ephraim spoke.*—Ephraim means here the tribe properly so called, in distinction from the other tribes of *Israel*, mentioned immediately after. Such was the power and influence which it originally evinced over the rest, that they showed it the utmost deference. Perhaps it was *Ephraim* who uttered the words "To your tents, O Israel!" (I Kings xii., v. 16). Thus taken, it may refer to the division of the ten tribes from Rehoboam, and the establishment of the kingdom of Israel under Jeroboam. In Pococke's Arab. MS., the words are rendered: "When Ephraim spoke trembling fell upon men." And so Tanchum: "The meaning is, that men revered him, and trembled at his word." The same construction is adopted by Jerome, Kimchi, Abarbanel, Grotius, Tingstadius, Dathe, Kuinoel, De Wette, Maurer, Noyes, and Hitzig. It is impossible to accept the translation of Ewald: "Wie Ephraim redete Empörung, es Aufruhr machte in Israel," *When Ephraim gave utterance to sedition, it produced rebellion in Israel.* Or to take "R'seth" adverbially, and render it *tremblingly*, as the Authorised Version, is neither suited to the connection; nor is there a period recorded *when Ephraim spake tremblingly, i.e.*, in humility. *Pride* was his characteristic, almost as soon as he had a separate existence as a tribe.—*And died.*—This must be taken in a civil or political sense; to lose one's influence, become subject to misery, punishment, etc. It forms an antithesis to "nasa" *to be exalted.* No sooner did the Ephraimites forsake the true God, and take up with idols, than He inflicted judgments upon them, by which their power was weakened, and at last became entirely extinct.

2.—This verse sets forth their perseverance in idolatrous practices, notwithstanding the chastisements with which they had been visited.—*Let the men that sacrifice.*—Aben Ezra, Abarbanel, Tanchum, Leo Juda, and among the moderns, Schmid, Michaelis, Horsley, Hitzig, and Schröder, render *the sacrificers of men*, on the principle that the presentation of human sacrifices is meant. This, however, was called in question by Kimchi, who explains, *the men who come to sacrifice.* To the same effect Munster, Mercer, Drusius, Bochart, the A. V., Lowth, Newcome, Boothroyd, Noyes, De Wette, Gesenius, Maurer, and Ewald. The rule of syntax respecting this mode of construction is, that when a genitive following an adjective is a noun

Idols of silver, according to their skill;
All of them the work of artificers;
They say to them:
"Let the men that sacrifice, kiss the calves."
3. Therefore, shall they be as the morning cloud,
And as the dew which early departeth;
As chaff driven by a whirlwind from the floor,
And as smoke out of the window.

of multitude, or of the plural number, such adjective is particularly used in poetry for the purpose of designating those of the multitude to which the specified quality belongs. See Gesenius, Lehrgeb. p. 678. Instances are Isa. xxxix., v. 19: "the poor of men," *i.e.*, those of men who are poor; Micah. v., v. 5: "the anointed of men," *i.e.*, such of men as are anointed. So in the present case, "the sacrificers of men," *i.e.*, those of or among men that sacrifice, which is merely a periphrasis for *priests*. Although, therefore, it is a fact that the ten tribes did sacrifice their children to Moloch (II Kings xvii., v. 17), it would be more than precarious to draw any such inference from the present passage, especially as the Prophet mentions the *calves*, of whose worship human sacrifices, so far as we know, formed no part.—*Kiss the calves.*—It was customary for idolaters to give the kiss of adoration to the objects of their worship. This was sometimes done by merely touching the lips with the hand, to which reference is made Job xxxi., v. 27. At other times the idol itself was kissed by the worshippers. Compare I Kings xix., v. 18. Thus Cicero tells us, that at Agrigentum in Sicily there was a brazen image of the Tyrian Hercules, whose mouth and chin were worn by the kisses of his worshippers—"non solum id venerari, verum etiam *osculari* solebant." Act ii, in Verrem, lib iv., cap. 43. Nothing is more common in the Russian churches than for the devotees to kiss the images. The construction of the original is somewhat difficult. As usually divided it is interpreted thus: they, *i.e.*, the Ephraimites, say of them (the images), let the sacrificers kiss the calves; but it is better to take "the sacrificers" as in apposition with, and exegetical of "they say," *i.e.*, they, the men that sacrifice, say to the people, kiss the calves. While the priests presented the sacrifices, they encouraged the worshippers to come forward and kiss the objects of their adoration.

3.—Compare ch. vi., v. 4. *From the floor.*—The threshing floor, being an open area, generally on an eminence, was peculiarly exposed to the wind, which carried off the chaff, on its being trodden out, or separated from the grain.—*As smoke out of the window.*—The only thing in the East that approaches to a chimney, is a funnel above the fire-place, to conduct the smoke out of the room. A structure rising *above* the roof, for the same purpose, and to increase the draught, is not known, nor is the other much in use. There is no evidence for the existence of a *chimney* (see the Authorised Version) in ancient times. It is not clear that even the Romans had any, and none certainly occur at Pompeii, or Herculaneum. They employed charred

4. Yet, I am the Lord thy God
From the land of Egypt,
And no God but me shouldst thou know;
Nor is there any saviour besides me.
5. I knew thee in the wilderness,
In the land of great drought.
6. As they were fed, so were they satiated;
They were satiated, and their hearts were lifted up;
Therefore have they forgotten me:
7. So that I must become to them as a fierce lion;
I must watch for them as a leopard by the way.
8. I must meet them as a bear bereaved of her whelps,
And rend the caul of their heart;

wood, or wood that emitted no smoke, or let the smoke escape at the windows, or at holes made for the purpose. In the present instance, the word "Arubah," means any kind of hole or opening, and particularly a window. The idea of a speedy removal is that conveyed by all the images here employed.

4.—Compare ch. xii., v. 10. The Sept., Syr., Targum, and several Hebrew MSS., supply here as in ch. xii., v. 12: *who brought thee out.* The long addition in the Sept., however, is totally unsupported, and was probably inserted in that version by some scholiast.

5.—*I knew thee.*—I acted towards thee with kindness and favour; and by miraculously providing for thee in that land of drought, I demonstrated my love.

6.—*As they were fed.*—In proportion to their enjoyment of the provision which I made for them, feeding them with manna from heaven, and afterwards abundantly supplying their wants. For the rest of the verse compare Deut. xxxii., vv. 13-15.

7.—*So that I must become.*—The "vau" is inferential, showing that what follows was the result of what is stated in the preceding verse. The images here employed are of frequent occurrence. Compare Job x., v. 16; Ps. vii., v. 2; Isa. xxxviii., v. 13; Lam. iii., v. 10.—*As a leopard.*—The leopard is noted for his swiftness, ferocity, and especially his cruelty to man. He lurks in the dense thicket of the wood, and springs with great velocity on his victim. For "ashur," *I watched*, sixteen of De Rossi's MSS., three ancient editions, and twenty-four others, the Sept., Syr., Vulg., and Arab., read "Asshur," *Assyria*, which some prefer, on account of the number of lions, panthers, tigers, etc., with which the regions of Southern Asia abound. The text would then read: *As a leopard, in the way to Assyria*; but the common reading is more in accordance with the spirit of the passage.

8.—*Rend the caul of their heart.*—Every savage beast goes first to *the seat of the blood*, when it has seized its prey; and in this fluid they

I must devour them there as a lioness;
The wild beast must rend them in pieces.
9. O Israel! Thou hast destroyed thyself!
Nevertheless, in me truly is thine help.
10. Where is thy king? Where is he?
That he may save thee in all thy cities?
And thy judges? Since thou saidst:
"Give me a king and princes?"
11. I gave thee a king in mine anger,
And took him away in my wrath.
12. The guilt of Ephraim is bound up,
His punishment is laid up in store.

delight more than in the most delicate parts of the flesh.—*Devour them—as a lioness.*—Drinking the blood, tearing the flesh, and break the bones to extract the marrow.

9.—*Thou hast destroyed thyself.*—"Shichethcha," I take to be a noun with the suffix, *thy destruction*! *i.e.*, the destruction is thine own; thou hast brought it upon thyself by thy sins. It is, therefore, equivalent to "thou has destroyed thyself," and cannot be better rendered. Some, however, as Kimchi, supply *the calf*; others, *thy king*, from the following verse; others, some other noun, and take "Shicheth," to be the third person singular of Piel. Newcome unwarrantably adopts the rendering of the Syriac: "I have destroyed thee."—*Nevertheless in me.*—Other sources may be applied to, and they may promise thee assistance; but from Me alone sufficient aid is to be expected, and in Me it is to be found. This exegesis is strongly supported, if not rendered absolutely necessary, by the pointed interrogation in the following verse. The Sept. and Syr. read: "And *who* will help thee?" reading "mi" *who*, instead of "be," *in me*; yet there is no evidence of it in any of the MSS. yet collected.

10.—*Where is thy king?*—"Ehi" is in all probability a metathesis for "Ayeh," *Where?* It is thus rendered by the Sept., Syr., Vulg., Targum, Abulwalid, Tanchum, and by most modern expositors. It is also so taken by Gesenius, Lee, Winer, and Fürst; and alone suits the connection.

11.—Some refer the circumstances here mentioned to the selection and removal of Saul; he was, however, rejected for his *own sin*, and not as a punishment of the people. It is, therefore, more in keeping with the speciality of the Prophet's address, to consider the king to be Jeroboam and his successors in the regal dignity; and that the removal regards the frequent changes which took place in the history of the Israelitish kings, which proved a source of great calamity to the nation. See II Kings xv.

12.—The metaphors are here borrowed from the custom of tying up money in bags, and depositing it in some secret place, in order that it may be preserved. The certainty of punishment is the idea conveyed by them.—*His punishment.*—Compare Deut. xxxii., v. 34.

13. The pangs of a travailing woman
Shall come upon him;
He is an unwise son;
Otherwise he would not remain long
In the place of the breaking forth of children.
14. Shall I ransom them from the power of the grave?
Shall I redeem them from death?—
O death! Where are thy plagues?
O sheol! Where is thy pestilence?
Compassion shall be hid from mine eyes.

13.—Another instance of two metaphors closely connected, the transition from the one to the other of which is, in the manner of the Orientals, rapid and unexpected. It is not unusual in Scripture to compare the calamities of a people to the sorrows of child-birth.—*He is an unwise son.*—Speaking after the manner of men, he must be deemed an *unwise son*, who, if he had the power and consideration, would prolong his stay in the porch of life, where he must be necessarily suffocated. So is Ephraim, who, though warned of his danger, having yet power to escape, continued in his sin, and is now come to destruction.—*In the place of the breaking forth.*—As there is a critical time in parturition in which the mother, in hard labour, may by skilful assistants be eased of her burden, which, if neglected, may endanger the life both of parent and child, so there was a time in which Ephraim might have returned to God, but they would not; therefore, they are now in danger of being finally destroyed. I could illustrate the allusion in the text further, and show the accurate propriety of the original, but the subject forbids it.

14.—*Shall I ransom them.*—Most commentators consider this passage as being a promise of the restoration of the Israelites, and the complete destruction of the enemies by whom they had been carried into captivity. They, therefore, render: "I will ransom.—I will redeem them." According to my humble opinion, the passage from verse 12 until verse 16 inclusive is closely connected together, and is no promise whatever.—*From the power.*—Literally: "from the hand," a common Hebraism for "from the power."—*Ransom—redeem.*—"Padah," properly signifies *to redeem*, or *buy loose*, by the payment of a price; "gaal," *to avenge* the murderer of a relative, and also *to recover* or *redeem* property by repayment.—*Where are thy plagues.*—Respecting the word "Ehi," interpreters are far from being agreed. The Vulg., Coverdale, Tingstadius, Horsley, Dathe, Kuinoel, De Wette, Noyes, Rosenmüller, and Maurer, take it to be the first person future of the substantive verb "hayah," *to be*; whereas the Sept., Syr., Arab., Abulwalid, Tanchum, Mercer, Newcome, Boothroyd, Ewald, Hitzig, and Fuerstenthal, consider it to be used as in verse 10 for "Ayeh" *where*? With the latter authorities I concur, partly on the ground that it is not likely the Prophet would employ the same word in the same form in two different acceptations in verses 10 and 14, and partly because I find "ehi" nowhere used absolutely as an

15. Though he grow luxuriant in green meadows,
An east wind—a wind of the Lord,
Shall come up from the wilderness,
And his spring shall become dry,
And dry up his fountain;
He shall spoil the treasure of all pleasant vessels.

XIV. 1. Samaria shall meet her punishment,
Because she hath rebelled against her God;
They shall fall by the sword;
Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
And their pregnant women shall be ripped up.

apocopated future; but always with the "vau" conversive prefixed. To which add, that the interrogation is more in keeping with the animated style of the passage.

15.—*He.*—Ephraim, mentioned in verse 12.—*Green meadows.*—So Fuerstenthal—"Yaphri," *grow luxuriant*, is here used with special reference to the name of *Ephraim*, being the root whence it is derived, and not improbably exhibits "aleph," instead of "he," because it forms the first letter of the noun. The tribe of Ephraim was the most numerous in regard to population, and was for a time in the most flourishing circumstances. That such is the signification of the verb, and that it is not to be rendered *divide* or *separate*, as in the ancient and several of the modern versions, nor *act like a wild ass*, which others exhibit, appears from the mention of a *spring* and a *fountain.*—*A wind of the Lord.*—A wind caused, sent by, or proceeding from God: not "a great wind," as some interpret.—*He shall spoil.*—The Assyrian, couched under the metaphor of the destructive wind, shall plunder every valuable article belonging to the Israelites.

1.—This verse should not have been disjoined from the former chapter, for it intimately coheres with the preceding context.—*Samaria shall meet her punishment.*—The Hebrew word "tesham," signifies *to be guilty of crime*, and *to be treated as guilty, to suffer punishment, be punished.* Samaria, as the metropolis, and the source of all the calamities which were coming upon the Israelites, is put as representing the whole nation: but not to the exclusion of the peculiarly severe punishment which the inhabitants of that city had to expect. For the concluding portion of the verse, compare II Kings viii., v. 12; xv., v. 16; Amos i., v. 13. That such cruelties were not unknown among other nations; see Iliad vi., 58, and Horace, Carm., iv., Ode 6. The construction "hariyothov yebukau" is *ad sensum*, though not according to the strict rule of grammar, and may have been occasioned by the form of "yerutashu" immediately preceding.

2. Return, O Israel! to the Lord thy God;
For thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.
3. Take with you words, and return to the Lord;
Say to Him:
"Pardon all our iniquity, and graciously receive us;
"Then we will repay the bullocks with our lips.
4. "Assyria shall not help us;
"We will not ride upon horses;

2.—*Return.*—The "he" of direction in the imperative "shuvah," is, as usual, intensive, marking a strong desire on the part of the speaker that the action expressed by the verb may take place. The heavy and scarcely interrupted tide of denunciation is now past. The Prophet now invites them to repentance. "Great is repentance," says the Talmud, "which maketh men to reach quite up to the Throne of Glory."—*By thine iniquity.*—Not by fate, or fortune of war, but *by thine iniquity thou hast fallen.* Thy remedy then is in thine own hand: *Return to thy God.*

3.—*Take with you words.*—He bids them not to bring costly offerings, that they might regain His favour, nor the silver and gold which they had lavished on their idols; but what seems the cheapest of all, which any may have, without cost to their substance: *words*: worthless, as mere words; precious, when from the heart.—*Pardon all our iniquity.*—"Nasa 'avon" is a phrase of such frequent occurrence with the meaning *to pardon iniquity*, that it is surprising how Horsley could insist upon its meaning to "to take away the sinful principle within us." His construction of "kach tov" *accept as good, what, so regenerate, we shall be enabled to perform*, is equally indefensible on the ground of philology. "Tov" is used adverbially, *benigne, in bonam partem*; and the meaning is, graciously receive us back in Thy favour. With respect to the interposition of the verb "tissa" between "kol" and "'avon," it may be observed, that it is not a solitary instance of such construction. Compare Job xv., v. 10.—*We will repay the bullocks.*—Of sacrifice.—*With our lips.*—With the prayer of our lips. The Prophet's meaning is, "We will render, in grateful return for thy forgiving and restoring mercy, the only sacrifice worthy of it—our tribute of thanksgiving and praise." I received just now a valuable commentary (in Hebrew) on the Prophets, lately published by A. B. Levensohn, of Wilna, one of the greatest Biblical scholars of Russia, and author of several works in Hebrew. For the benefit of the English reader, I shall give his comment whenever I shall think it worth notice. On the passage: "We will repay the bullocks." Levensohn observes: "We will repay the sacrifices—which we did not offer since the time of Jeroboam—with the prayers and thanksgivings of our lips."

4.—Three of the sins to which the ten tribes were specially prone are here implied: dependence upon the aid of the Assyrians; application to Egypt for horses, in direct violation of the Divine command, Deut. xvii., v. 16; and idolatry. These they now for ever renounce,

"Neither will we say any more: 'Our gods,'
"To the work of our hands:
"For in Thee alone the orphan findeth mercy."
5. I will heal their apostasy:
I will love them freely;
For my anger is turned away from them.
6. I will be as the dew unto Israel;
He shall blossom as the lily,
And strike his roots like Lebanon.
7. His suckers shall spread forth,

and avow their determination henceforth to trust in God alone; adding as the reason of such determination, the experience which they had had of the Divine favour in time of need.—*For in Thee alone.*—"Asher" is here used in a causal sense, *because, for, forasmuch as.* Compare Gen. xxxi., v. 29; Eccles. iv., v. 9.—*The orphan.*—This is here applied metaphorically to the unprotected and destitute circumstances in which the Israelites had been, while in a state of separation from God.

5.—*I will heal their apostasy.*—Here is the answer of God to their prayers and resolutions.—*From them.*—Literally: "from *him*," *i.e.*, Israel.

6.—*I will be as the dew.*—The love of God to His people, and its effects in their happy experience, are here couched in similes borrowed from the vegetable kingdom. The dew is very copious in the East, and, by its refreshing and quickening virtue, supplies the place of more frequent rains in other countries. Kimchi thinks that the constancy with which the dew falls is the point here more specially referred to, and to which the Divine blessing is compared.—*As the lily.*—Lilies abound in Palestine, even apart from cultivation. There are two kinds: the common lily, which is perfectly white, consisting of six leaves, opening like bells, and what the Syrians call *the royal lily*, the stem of which is about the size of a finger in thickness, and which grows to the height of three and four feet, spreading its flowers in the most beautiful and engaging manner. To these productions the moral beauty of regenerated Israel is very aptly compared.—*Roots like Lebanon.*—The mountain stands here by metonymy for the trees which grow upon it, such as the celebrated cedars, whose roots striking far in depth and length into the ground, give them a firmness which no storms can shake. The ideas of *strength* and *stability* are those conveyed by the simile, whether we refer the roots to the trees, or metaphorically, to the mountain itself; but the amplification in the following verse renders the former the preferable construction.

7.—*Shall spread forth.*—"Halach" is often used, not merely of continued, but of increased action, and here denotes *to spread out* as the suckers of small branches of trees.—*Olive-tree.*—The olive is frequently referred to, on account of its beautiful green, and the pleasing idea associated with its produce. Though the former only

And his beauty shall be as the olive-tree,
And his fragrance as Lebanon.
8. They shall return that sat under his shadow;
They shall revive as the corn,
And bloom as the vine:
Their fame shall be as the wine of Lebanon.
9. Ephraim shall say:
"What have I any more to do with idols?"
I have answered Him, and will regard Him;
I am like a green cypress;
Through me thy fruit is found.

is expressed, yet the idea of fragrance is implied, only it is with the strictest propriety extended in the following clause to the whole of Lebanon, on account of the number of odoriferous trees and plants with which it abounds. In these verses, the rendering *frankincense*, which Newcome prefers to *Lebanon*, is not to be admitted.

8.—*That sat under his shadow.*—Under the shadow of Lebanon. —*Their fame.* — Literally: *his celebrity, fame*; Israel understood, collectively, but best rendered in the plural.—*As the wine of Lebanon.* —Harmer has collected from travellers some distinct notices of the still superior quality of the wine of Lebanon. Rauwolf relates that the Patriarch (at Canobin) gave him some *white* wine in Venice glasses, of which he was tempted to drink a good deal, for it was so pleasant, that he never, in all his life, drank any like it. Le Bruyn, when at the same place, says he found there more delicate wines than were to be met with anywhere else in the world. "They are *red*, of a beautiful colour, and so oily that they adhere to the glass." After citing the present text, he adds, that there were other wines, not so good, but more abundant. "As the Patriarch had great esteem for us, he always caused the best to be given to us. I found it so excellent that I did not think I ever tasted any kind of drink more delicious." La Roque, at the same convent, observes that it would be difficult to find elsewhere more excellent wines than can be there obtained—"Which caused us to think the reputation of the wine of Lebanon, of which the Prophet speaks, was well founded. These wines are of two sorts; the most common is the *red*, and the most exquisite is of the colour of our muscadine wine."

9.—*Ephraim.*—Several interpreters take *Ephraim* to be in the vocative case, but, as it seems harsh to refer the words immediately following to God, it is better to regard it as a nominative absolute and to supply "yomar," thus: As for Ephraim—the tribe distinguished above all the rest for its addictedness to idolatry, and the fit representative of the whole people—his language in the future shall be, etc. For "li" *to me*, the Sept. reads "lo" *to him*, which facilitates the construction, and is adopted by Ewald, but without sufficient authority.—*Will regard him.*—"Shur," signifies *to view with regard and care, care for, watch over.* Every provision should hence-

10. Who is wise, that he may understand these things?
Prudent, that he may know them?
For the ways of the Lord are right;
The righteous shall walk in them;
But the transgressors shall stumble in them.

forth be made for the protection and prosperity of restored Israel. Manger thinks there is here a dialogistic parallelism, which he exhibits thus:

EPHRAIM.—What have I further to do with idols?
GOD.—I have answered, and will regard him.
EPHRAIM.—I am like a green cypress.
GOD.—From me is thy fruit found.

10.—These words form an epilogue or conclusion to the whole book. The interrogation is employed for the purpose of excitement, and to give energy to the truths conveyed. It is worthy of remark, that this is the only verse in which the Prophet uses "tzaddikim," *the righteous*, or any synonymous term, in the course of his recorded prophecies.

JOEL.

INTRODUCTION.

We possess no further knowledge of Joel than what is furnished by the title of his book, or may be gathered from circumstances incidentally mentioned in it. That he lived in Judah, and, in all probability, at Jerusalem, we may infer from his not making the most distant reference to the kingdom of Israel; while, on the other hand, he speaks of Jerusalem, the temple, priests, ceremonies, &c, with a familiarity which proves them to have been before his eyes.

With respect to the age in which he flourished, opinions have differed. Bauer places him in the reign of Jehoshaphat; Credner, Winer, Krahmer, and Ewald, think he lived in that of Joash; Vitringa, Carpzov, Moldenhauer, Eichhorn, Holzhausen, Theiner, Rosenmüller, Knobel, Hengstenberg, Gesenius, and De Wette, in that of Uzziah; Steudel and Bertholdt, in that of Hezekiah; Tarnovius and Eckermann assign the period of his activity to the days of Josiah; while the author of Sedar Olam, Rashi, Newcome, and Jahn, are of opinion that he prophesied in the reign of Manasseh. The most probable hypothesis is that his predictions were delivered in the early days of Joash; that is, according to Credner, B.C. 870-865. No reference being made to the Babylonian, the Assyrian, or even the Syrian invasion, and the only enemies of whom mention is made being the Phœnicians, Philistines, Edomites, and Egyptians, it seems evident that Joel was unacquainted with any but the latter. Had he lived after the death of Joash, he could scarcely have omitted to notice the Syrians when speaking of hostile powers, since they not only invaded the land, but took Jerusalem, destroyed the princes, and carried away immense spoil to Damascus (II Chron. xxiv., vv. 23-24). The state of religious affairs, as represented to view in the book, is altogether in favour of this position. No mention is made of idolatrous practices; while on the contrary, notwithstanding the guilt which attached to the people, on account of which God brought judgments upon the land, the principles of the theocracy are supposed to be maintained; the priests and people are represented as being harmoniously occupied with the services of religion; and Jerusalem, the temple and its worship, appear in a flourishing condition. Now this was precisely the state of things during the high-priesthood of Jehoiada, through whose influence Joash had been placed upon the throne. See II Kings xi., vv. 17-18, xii., vv. 2-16; II Chron. xxiv., vv. 4-14. It will follow that Joel is the oldest of all the Hebrew prophets whose predictions have come down to us.

In point of style Joel stands pre-eminent among the Hebrew prophets. He not only possesses a singular degree of purity, but is distinguished by his smoothness and fluency; the animated and rapid character of his rhythmus; the perfect regularity of his parallelisms; and the degree of roundness which he gives to his sentences. He has no abrupt transitions, is everywhere connected, and finishes whatever he takes up. In description he is graphic and perspicuous; in arrangement lucid; in imagery original, copious and varied. In the judgment of Knobel, he most resembles Amos in regularity, Nahum in animation, and in both respects Habakkuk; but is surpassed by none of them. That what we now possess is *all* he ever wrote is in the highest degree improbable; on the contrary, we should conclude from the cultivated character of his language, that he had been accustomed to composition long before he penned these discourses.

Whatever degree of obscurity attaches to his book, is attributable to our ignorance of the subjects of which it treats, not to the language which he employs.

JOEL.

CHAPTER I.

1. The word of the Lord which was communicated to
   Joel, the son of Pethuel:
2. Hear this, ye aged men!
   And give ear, all ye inhabitants of the land!
   Did such a thing as this happen in your days,
   Or, in the days of your fathers?
3. Tell ye your children of it,
   And let your children tell their children,
   And their children another generation.
4. That which the gnawing locust hath left,
   The swarming locust hath eaten;

1.—*The son of Pethuel.*—Who *Pethuel*, the father of our Prophet, was, we are not informed. The introduction of his name was necessary in order to distinguish the present Joel from others of the same name; though, according to the Talmud (Megillah fol. 15), whenever the Prophet's *father* is mentioned, the same was also a prophet. If we adopt this opinion, *Pethuel* was then a prophet or some person of eminence. We must, however, not lose sight of the fact that it was common among the Hebrews, as it is still among the Orientals, to add the name of the father to that of the son.

2.—This and the following verse contain an animated introduction to the following subject.—*Did such a thing as this.*—Lit.: "did *this*," the feminine according to the Hebrew idiom used for the neuter, but it occurs here elliptically for "kazoth," *like this, such, the like*, and refers to the astounding calamity of the locusts about to be described. He begins very abruptly; and, before he proposes his subject, excites attention and alarm by intimating that he is about to announce disastrous events, such as the oldest men among them had never seen, nor any of them learnt from the histories of ancient times.

3.—*Tell ye your children of it.*—To heighten the effect he still conceals the subject; and informs them that it is such as should be handed down from father to son through all generations. The language here employed by Joel is cumulative beyond example.

4.—The plague, which occasioned the following discourses of the Prophet, is now described in language which is at the same time terse and full of repetition. This verse may be considered as the text on

And that which the swarming locust hath left,
The licking locust hath eaten;

which he afterwards expatiates. Interpreters have found great difficulty both in determining the precise signification of the several terms employed to describe the scourge, and the light in which it was designed to be understood. While some are of opinion that different kind of insects are meant, most are agreed in considering *locusts* to be intended. Yet here again discordant views obtain: some insisting on different species of locusts, and others on different states of the same species. Credner, for instance, in a work on our Prophet, full of erudition, considers "gazam" to be the *migratory locust*; "arbeh" *the young brood*; "yelek" the young locust *in the last state of transformation*; and "chasil" the *perfect locust*.—The locust belongs to the genus of insects known among entomologists by the name of *grylli*, which includes the different species, from the *common grasshopper* to the *devouring locust* of the East. The largest of the latter is about three inches in length, has two *antennae*, or horns, about an inch long, and two wings, which in their cases, are applied obliquely to the sides of the body when in repose. The feet have only three joints, but are six in number. The two hind ones are much larger than the rest, and are formed for leaping. The locusts are of different colours, brown, grey, and spotted. In all stages, from the larvæ to the perfect insect, the locusts are herbivorous, and do immense injury to vegetation. The subject, so far as it occurs in scripture, may be said to have been almost exhausted by the learned Bochart, in his Hierozoicon, Pars Post, Lib. iv., cap. 1-8. The fourth chapter he specially devotes to the explanation of the passages in Joel. See also Oedmann's Vermischte Sammlungen, and Credner's Joel. The first name, "Gazam," occurs only here and Amos iv., v. 9, and is rendered by the Vulg. *eruca, caterpillar*. This interpretation is supported by the Targum: "the crawling insect," by which, however, may be meant the locust in its wingless state. The Syr. renders the word by *locusta non alata*. It is evidently derived from the same root with the Arab. *resecuit, amputavit*; Talmud, *amputavit*; and expresses the gnawing or cutting action of the sharp teeth of the locusts on the leaves, and even the bark of trees. Comp. Plin. Nat. Hist., lib. II, cap. 29: omnia vero *morsu erodentes*. "Arbeh" is the generic name of the locust, so called from the almost incredible numbers which breed in different parts of the East, being derived from "rabah," *to multiply, be numerous*, &c. Comp. Jer. xlvi., v. 23. From the migrating in swarms it is called by Forskall *gryllus gregarius*, and by Linnaeus, *gryllus migratorius*. By the Sept. the word is rendered seventeen times by *the common locust*; thrice by *the unwinged locust*, which browses on the grass; once by *mildew*, and once by *the young* or *small locust*. That "Arbeh" is generic, appears from Lev. xi., v. 22, where we read: "ha-arbeh lemino," *the locust according to its species*. The third name "yelek," from "yalak," equivalent to "lakak," *to lick*, designates the locust as *licking off* the leaves, and whatever is green on the trees, grass, &c. This derivation is preferable to that of Michaelis, who refers the word to the Arab *properavit, volubilis fuit*, or to *albus fuit*, and thinks that the *chafer* is meant. In Nah. iii., v. 16, it is represented as *winged*,

And that which the licking locust hath left,
The consuming locust hath eaten.

and in Jer. li., v. 27, it is described as "Samar," *rough, bristly, terrific.* "Chasil," the remaining term, comes from "chasal," *to consume, devour.* A comparison of the different passages in which these names occur, renders it more than probable that they are here employed by the Prophet, not with any reference to the species into which the locusts may be scientifically divided, but to designate *four successive swarms*, according to certain destructive qualities, by which, as a genus of insects, they are distinguished, and thereby to heighten the terror which his description was intended to produce. Just as Job accumulates five different terms for the lion (ch. iv., vv. 10-11), with a similar view. They are rather poetical synonymes, than distinctive of different species. At all events that *locusts* are meant may be inferred from the facts that wherever "yelek" occurs, with the exception of a single passage, it occurs along with "Arbeh;" and that "Arbeh" which Moses uses in describing one of the plagues of Egypt (Exod. x., vv. 10-20), is not only employed by the Psalmist (lxxviii., v. 46; cv., v. 34), but also "chasil" and "yelek," as synonymous terms, for the sake of variety. Add to which that the verb "chasal," from which "chasil" is derived, is employed to express the action of the "Arbeh," (Deut. xxviii., v. 38); "Yachselenu ha-arbeh," *the locust shall consume it.* In the translation I have given the meaning of the several names in terms expressive of the qualities suggested by each. The passage might otherwise be rendered with Noyes:

"That which one swarm of locust left, a second swarm hath eaten;
And that which the second left, a third swarm hath eaten;
And that which the third left, a fourth swarm hath eaten."

It is a question of greater importance: Are the statements of Joel in the first and second chapters to be understood *literally* of these insects, or *figuratively* of enemies that were to invade and lay waste the Holy Land? The latter is the opinion of the Targum, and Abarbanel; and is, with various modifications, adopted by the following christian interpreters: Jerome, E. Syrus, Theodoret, Cyril of Alexandria, Ribera, Sanchez, Luther, Grotius, Marckius, Bertholdt, Theiner, Steudel, and Hengstenberg. On the other hand, Rashi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Schmidius, Jahn, Eichhorn, Rosenmüller, Credner, and Hitzig, maintain that the language is to be understood literally of locusts. This interpretation has certainly much in its favour, and if it could without violence be applied throughout, might fairly be adopted. But the announcement of a second and more awful judgment, ch. i., v. 15; ii., vv. 1-2; the distinct recognition of a foreign rule, ii., v. 17; and the assignment of the *North* as the native country of the enemy, ii., v. 20, present insuperable obstacles to its adoption. See on these verses. There seems no possibility of effecting a consistent interpretation on any other principle than that laid down and defended by Cramer, Eckerman, and Holzhausen, viz., that in the first chapter, Joel describes a devastation of the country which had been effected by natural locusts; but predicts in the second, its devastation by political enemies, in highly-wrought metaphorical language, borrowed from the scene which he had just depicted.

5. Awake, ye drunkards! and weep;
Howl, all ye drinkers of wine!
On account of the sweet wine;
Since it is made to cease from your mouth.
6. For a nation hath come up upon my land,
Mighty and innumerable;

5.—*Awake.*—"Hekitz," the Hiph. of "kutz," is here used, like the cognate root "yakatz," Gen. ix., v. 24, in the sense of awaking from a sleep occasioned by wine. Since, however, the persons addressed had been deprived of the means of intoxication, the Prophet is rather to be understood as borrowing the term from the state in which they had too often been found.—*Ye drunkards.*—"Shikkorim" being parallel with "Shothe yayin," *drinkers of wine*, does not here mean persons actually *intoxicated*, but such as were in the habit of using intoxicating liquors, and by implication, to excess. Thus Kimchi: "Ye who are accustomed to make yourselves drunk with wine." It is derived from "Shachar," *to drink to the full*; hence "Shechar," *strong* or *intoxicating drink*, whether wine itself, or, more commonly, liquor resembling wine, which is distilled from barley, honey, or dates, and sometimes mingled with spices.—*Sweet wine.*—By "'Asis" is meant the *fresh wine*, or juice of the grape, or other fruit which has just been *pressed out*, and is remarkable for its sweet flavour, and its freedom from intoxicating qualities. Root "'asas," *to tread, tread down* or *out*. Targum: "pure wine." It differs from "tirosh," inasmuch as the latter term is confined to the *juice of the grape*, and being derived from "yarash," *to take possession of*, indicates that however new it had already obtained an inebriating quality. The locusts are here represented as specially attacking the vines and other fruit-trees, from the produce of which these wines were prepared. To such they are known to be very destructive. Comp. Theocrit. Idyll. 5, 108, in which a shepherd beseeches them not to injure his vines.—*To cease.*—"Karath," properly signifies to *cut, cut off*, but here as wine is the subject spoken of, it must be taken in the sense of *destroying*, or *causing to cease.*

6.—*For a nation.*—"Goy," *nation*, especially used of foreign, barbarous, and profane nations, and here selected on purpose to express the number and hostility of the locusts, and at the same time to prepare their minds for the allegorical use made of these insects in chap. ii. If it had not been for some such end, the Prophet might have adopted the term "'Am," *people*, which Solomon applies to the ants, Prov. xxx., vv. 25-26, and which would equally have conveyed the idea of multitude. Comp. ch. ii., v. 2. This metaphorical use of the term is common in the classics. See instances in Bochart and Gesen. Heb. Lex. *in voc.* "goy."—*Come up upon.*—This term is used in a hostile sense of an army, Isai. vii., v. 1; but here figuratively of the locusts.—*My land.*—The pronominal prefix belongs to *God*, not to the Prophet. Comp. Isai. xiv., v. 25; Jer. xvi., v. 18; Ezek. xxxvi., v. 5; xxxviii., v. 16; Joel ii., v. 18.—*Mighty.*—The strength of the locust consist in the immense numbers, which, forming

Their teeth are the teeth of a lion;
They have the grinders of a lioness.
7. They have laid waste my vine,
And barked my fig-tree:
They have completely stripped it,
And thrown it down;
Its branches they have left white.

8. Lament, as a virgin girded with sackcloth,
On account of the husband of her youth.

themselves into compact bodies, darken the air, and advance forward, one swarm after another, attacking whatever comes in their way.—*Innumerable.*—All who refer to them, both in ancient and modern times, speak of them in the same language. "Immensae locustarum multitudines." Orosius, v. 11. Shaw speaks of "infinite swarms following each other." Barrow states that those which he saw in South Africa, might literally be said to cover the ground of an area of 2,000 square miles. And Dr. Bowring states in his report, that some years ago the army of Ibrahim Pasha, in the attempt to extirpate an immense swarm, gathered up no less than 65,000 ardebs, equal to 325,000 bushels of English measure! How appropriate the term "Arbeh!"—*Grinders.*—The metaphor has no respect to the *size* of the teeth of the lions, but only to the terrible and complete destruction which they effect. According to Fabricius, in his Genera Insectorum, p. 96, the teeth of the locusts are three-forked and sharp.

7.—*My vine.*—For the pronominal reference, see on "my land," in the preceding verse. In a special sense, the land on which the vines and fig-trees grew were God's. The *vine* has, from time immemorial, abounded in Palestine. It often grows to a great size, and produces grapes of corresponding bulk. Schulz describes one at Beitshin, near Ptolemais, the stem of which was a foot and a half in diameter, its height was about thirty feet, and by its branches and branchlets, which had to be supported, is formed a hut upwards of thirty feet broad and long. The clusters of these vines are so large that they weigh ten or twelve pounds, and the berries may be compared with our small plums. Rosenmüller, in Bib. Cab. vol. xxvii., p. 223. Comp. Numb. xiii., vv. 23-24. Palestine was equally celebrated for its *fig-trees*, which are not reared in gardens, as with us, but spontaneously in the open country. The figs were not only eaten fresh, but also preserved for food.—*And barked.*—The locusts not only consume the fruit and leaves of trees, but strip them of the very bark. See Ludolf, Comment. p. 178.—*Its branches.*—The interwining tendrils of the vine, from "sarag," *to interweave.* The *vine* being the more valuable of the two kinds of trees, the suffix refers back to it, and the *fig-tree* is treated as subordinate.

8.—*Lament.*—The land under the metaphor of a female, is here addressed. "Eli" is the second person feminine of the imperative in Kal of "Alah," which usually means *to swear*, call on God as witness; but here it takes the signification of the Syriac, *ululavit, deploravit,*

9. The offering and the libation,
Are cut off from the house of the Lord:
The priests mourn, the ministers of the Lord.
10. The field is laid waste, the ground mourneth,
For the corn is laid waste;
The new wine is dried up, the oil languisheth.

A country is frequently said to mourn when it is subject to devastation. See Isai. xxiv., v. 4; Jer. iv., v. 28; xii., v. 4; Hosh. iv., v. 3.—*As a virgin.*—A young woman, affianced to her husband, and, in this sense, viewed as married to him. The idea of the strength of youthful affection is that designed to be conveyed by the passage. In proportion to the force of such affection, would be the excessive degree of grief for his loss.—*With sackcloth.*—Wrapping oneself in sackcloth was a token of deep mourning.—*The husband.*—Properly *lord, master, possessor*; and secondarily *husband*, because in the East wives were, and still are, considered as the property rather than the companions of their husbands.

9.—To a pious mind the gloomiest view of external calamities will be taken from their influence upon the cause of God. The cessation of the usual solemnities of the temple worship, occasioned by the destruction of the fruits of the earth, must have occasioned great grief to the religious Jew. Jerome and others think that as the priests would be deprived from their regular support, by the cessation of the offerings, they mourned on that account; but of this I should say with Maurer: *Vates hic non videtur cogitasse.* "Mincha" stands here for offerings in general, whether bloody or unbloody—comp. Gen. iv., v. 4,—even when restricted in its signification to *meat-offering*, such as consisted of meal, salt, oil, and incense, the proper sacrifices. "Zebachim," are understood, as they were always connected with them, except in the case of the sin and trespass-offerings.—*The libation.*—The drink offering was called "Nesech," on account of its being *poured out*, from the root "Nasach," *to pour.*—*The priests.*—From the circumstance that Joel prefixes the article to "kohanim," *priests*, but not to "ikkarim," *husbandmen*, and "kor'mim," *vine-dressers*, Credner argues that he must either have been personally related to them, or that prophets and priests must have been more closely united at the time he wrote than afterwards.—*The ministers.*—This is a more dignified official term than "'Abadim," *servants*, which is employed to denote common slaves, as well as persons in more elevated situations about a king.

10.—The Prophet enters here more minutely into a description of the devastation occasioned by the locusts. "Sadeh," *field*, and "Adamah," *ground*, are synonymes, but differ in this respect, that the former denotes the open, free, uninclosed part of a country; the latter the rich red soil which is particularly fit for cultivation. Hence "ish ha-sadeh," *a man of the field*, means a hunter; "ish ha-adamah," *a man of the ground*, an agriculturist. The land is here, as frequently in the Hebrew prophets, made the subject of personification. Some

11. Be ashamed, ye husbandmen!
Howl, ye wine-dressers!
On account of the wheat and the barley;
For the harvest of the field hath perished.
12. The vine is dried up,
And the fig-tree languisheth;
The pomegranate, palm-tree, and the apple-tree;
All the trees of the field are withered;
Yea, joy is withered away from the children of men.

13. Gird yourselves, and mourn, O ye priests!
Howl, ye ministers of the altar!

would render "hobish," as applied to the new wine, *to be ashamed*; but occurring as it does in parallelism with "umlal" *to droop, languish*, like plants, it is better to retain the primary notion of "yabash," *to become dry, dry up.*

12.—*The pomegranate.*—The pomegranate tree is indigenous in Palestine and Syria, and is reckoned one of its noblest botanical productions. It grows to the height of twenty feet, has a straight stem, spreading branches, lancet-formed leaves, with large and beautiful red blossoms. The fruit is of the size of an orange, brown in colour, and affording a highly delicious and cooling juice. It is also planted in gardens, and in the courts of the houses; and its fruit is greatly improved by cultivation. It is still one of the trees most frequently seen in those countries.—*Palm-tree.*—So celebrated were the dates of Palestine that Pliny, speaking of the *date*, or *palm-tree*, says: "Judaea vero inclyta est vel magis palmis." It was adopted as a symbol of the country in coins struck under Vespasian and Domitian; and is frequently referred to in the H.S. It sometimes reaches the height of an hundred feet, is remarkable for its straight, upright growth, and forms one of the most beautiful trees in the vegetable kingdom. The fruit, which grows in clusters under the large leaves, is of an exceedingly sweet and agreeable taste, and, as an article both of sustenance and traffic, is of great value to the inhabitants. In Abyssinia the natives extract a juice from it which they manufacture into a fermented liquor resembling champagne.—*Apple-tree.*—The Hebrew term "tappuach" is in all probability generic in its signification. Rosenmüller adopts the view of Celsius, that the *quince* tree is specially intended. According to Dr. Tristram (Nat. Hist. of the Bible) the "tappuach" is the *apricot.*—*All the trees.*—To give to his description the utmost latitude, Joel adds: *all the trees of the field*; and to bring it more home to the feelings of his countrymen, he represents the consequence to be the entire removal of their joy.

13.—The prophet now addresses himself to the priests, and calls them first to personal mourning, and then, in the following verse, to institute a sacred fast, in order that such mourning might be general. —*Come.*—As Kimchi: "Enter the house of God, and there mourn."—

Come, spend the night in sackcloth,
Ye ministers of my God!
For the offering and the libation
Are withholden from the house of your God.

14. Appoint a sacred fast, proclaim a day of restraint;
Assemble the elders—all the inhabitants of the land,
To the house of the Lord your God,
And cry aloud unto the Lord.

15. Alas for the day!
For the day of the Lord draweth near,
And cometh as a mighty destruction
From the Almighty.

16. Is not the food cut off before our eyes?
Yea, joy and gladness from the house of our God?

Spend the night.—"Lin," or "lun," signifies *to spend*, or *remain over the night*, and retains this signification in the present passage, though, from the connexion, it is obvious not *one night only*, but many nights are meant. The priests were not only to wear the habit of mourning during the day, they were also to remain in it all night. Ahab is said to have lain in sackcloth when he humbled himself before God, I Kings xxi., v. 27.

14.—*Appoint a sacred fast.*—"Kiddesh," *to hallow, consecrate, to keep holy, to appoint sacred or religious services*; here to *institute a sacred* fast, by fixing the time and circumstances, and preparing the people for its proper observance. The interpretation of Rashi, Kimchi, and Aben Ezra, are defective, by leaving out the idea of *sacredness*, which the verb always conveys.—*A day of restraint.*—"'Atzarah," *restraint*, or being held back or prevented from labour: *day* or *period* understood. They were to abstain from their worldly avocations, and spend the portion of their time thus consecrated to the immediate and solemn duties of humiliation, confession, and prayer.—*Elders.*—In this connexion, the word "Z'kenim," *elders*, might be taken in an official sense, denoting those holding office among the people, who were expected to take the lead, and, by their example, to excite others to engage in the religious solemnities; but a comparison of this verse with ch. ii., v. 15, in which "children" and "sucklings" are mentioned, would rather require us to understand the term as referring to age. The central point of convocation was the temple—the special theocratic residence of Him whose wrath was to be deprecated, and His mercy implored.

15.—**Joel now exclaims: "Alas for the day!"**—*The day of the Lord.*—The period of punishment; *not* that of the plague of the locusts, but a more awful period still future, as the term "karob," *near, at hand*, sufficiently proves; for that term is never used to denote the actual presence of anything, but its speedy approach. What they were then suffering was only a prelude to still more dread-

17. The seeds are become dry beneath their clods;
The granaries are desolate,
The store-houses are destroyed,
Because the corn is withered.
18. How do the cattle groan!
How are the herds of oxen perplexed!
Because they have no pasture;
Yea, the flocks of sheep are destroyed.
19. Unto Thee, O God, do I call:
For fire hath consumed the pastures of the desert,
And a flame hath burnt all the trees of the field!

ful calamities.—*As a mighty destruction.*—See Isai. xiii., v. 6, where the same elegant paronomasia occurs. The "Caph" is, as there, the *caph veritatis*, and expresses the greatness of the evil.

17.—This, and the three following verses, describe the drought which was simultaneous with the judgment of the locusts.—*The seeds.*—"P'rudoth" from "parad," *to separate*, an action which takes place when, in sowing, the husbandman scatters the seed in distinct grains. To the same effect Tanchum: "grains prepared for sowing, so called because they are scattered in the ground."—*Desolate—destroyed.*—"Shamem" and "haras" are here to be taken in the sense of being left or neglected like places that have been laid waste or destroyed.—*Are become dry.*—For the elucidation of "'Abash" some compare the Chaldee "'Aphash," *to rot*; but it is with more propriety referred to the Arabic, and is of the same signification with "yabesh," *to be dry, dried up.* Thus Abulwalid. By the desiccating influence of the heat, the seeds that had been sown in the ground, would lose all their moister and perish.

18.—*Are perplexed.*—"Buch," in Niphal, expresses the *perplexity* to which anyone is reduced who does not know how to extricate himself from difficulty. The brute creation are graphically represented as being in this condition from the total failure of pasturage.—*Yea.*—*Even* the sheep, which subsist on herbage unsuitable for the oxen, are deprived of food. As the idea of *punishment* is conveyed by the verb "asham," it was in all probability used by the Prophet in order to teach the people that innocent creatures are involved in the consequences of guilt incurred by transgressors. Comp. Exod. xii., v. 29; Jonah iii., v. 7.

19.—*Unto Thee.*—It is not unusual for the Hebrew Prophets to give expression to their own feelings while describing the judgments that were brought upon their country. Comp. Isai. xv., v. 5, xvi., v. 11, xxi., vv. 3-4, xxii., v. 4; Jer. xxiii., v. 9.—*Fire—flame.*—It has been questioned whether the "fire" and "flame" are here to be taken literally of the actual burning of the grass, which often happens in extreme heat, or whether they are used figuratively or the heat itself. The former is more probably the meaning.

20. The beasts of the field look also up to Thee,
Because the streams of water are dried up;
And fire hath devoured the pastures of the desert!

CHAPTER II.

1. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion!
Sound an alarm in my holy mountain!
Let all the inhabitants of the land tremble:
For the day of the Lord cometh; it draweth near.
2. A day of darkness and gloom;
A day of clouds and dense obscurity;
Like the dawn spread over the mountains,
A numerous and mighty people:

20.—*Look also up to Thee.*—"'Arag," *to look up with panting* or *earnest desire.* The word beautifully expresses the natural action of animals parched with thirst, and deprived of all supply of water. They hold up their heads, as if their only expectations were from the God of heaven. Comp. Ps. xlii., v. 2, where the force of the original is lost by the rendering of the Auth. Vers.: "*after* the water-brooks." It should be *at* or *beside*, as the Psalmist evidently intended to represent the deer standing on the brink of the channels in which water usually flowed, but which had become dry. To their pitiable condition he compares his own circumstances when deprived of the usual means of spiritual refreshment.

1.—*Blow ye the trumpet.*—To give the greater effect to the alarm here commanded to be sounded, God himself is introduced as speaking. The persons addressed are the priests, on whom it devolved to blow with trumpets. They were to warn all of the threatened judgment. Compare ch. i., v. 15, where the Prophet anticipates what is now about to be the subject of special description.

2.—Synonymes are here accumulated to give intensity to the expression of the thought. The awful calamity which was to come upon the nation is set forth under the metaphor of darkness, which is of frequent occurrence in the Hebrew Scriptures, when sufferings and misery are the subjects of discourse. Compare Isa. viii., v. 22; lx., v. 2; Jer. xiii., v. 16; Amos v., v. 18; Zeph. i., v. 15. In the present instance, however, there was a singular propriety in adopting the language, since the Prophet was just going to introduce an allegory founded upon the fact that swarms of locusts had come over the land, and intercepting, by their density, the light of the sun, had occasioned a universal darkness. See on verse 10.—*Like the dawn.*—Some interpreters have stumbled at the apparent incongruity of comparing the coming affliction with the *aurora*, since the idea usually suggested by the figurative use of that term is *joy* or *prosperity*; but,

None such have ever been,
Neither shall there ever be after them,
During the years of successive generations.

as this idea is not exclusively conveyed by the use of it, as it is also employed to express the *certainty* (Hosh. vi., v. 3), and *suddenness* of anything (Hosh. x., v. 15), so here the obvious points of comparison are merely the *suddenness* and *extent* of the change produced by the diffusion of the rays of light without any reference to the nature of the change itself.

Joel now proceeds to introduce and describe the hostile army of the Assyrians in the same terms in which he had metaphorically described the locusts (ch. i., v. 6); only exchanging "goy," *nation*, for "'am," *people*, which is also used of foreign and idolatrous nations, (Numb. xxi., v. 29; I Chron. xvi., v. 20; Jer. xlviii., v. 42). In this description he not only transfers the metaphor back to the proper subject from which it was taken, but converts it into an allegory, and at considerable length, and in the most minute manner, exhibits the invasion, the formidable character, and the ravages of the barbarian foe. So perfectly is the allegorical veil woven throughout, that most commentators have been able to discover nothing more than the natural locusts in the passage. At the time in which the Prophet delivered his message, the locusts covered the land; they were before his eyes; the idea of them had so taken possession of his mind, that, considering the striking resemblance which they bore to an invading army, nothing was more natural than to exhibit the latter in sensible images taken from the scene by which both he and his hearers were surrounded. And, accustomed as they had been to the parabolic style of prophecy, they could have been at no loss to discover, that when in this part of his discourse he appeared to speak of locusts, it was not *natural* but *political* locusts he had in view. While the decidedly future aspect of the calamity (ch. i., v. 15; ii., v. 1), proves that it had not taken place at the time the words were delivered, a comparison of the language in the concluding part of verse 2, with that employed ch. i., v. 2, equally proves *that a plague of locusts could not have been intended.*

That the Assyrian invasion, under Sennacherib, and not that of the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, is meant, appears from the immense number of the army, its entire destruction in the land of Palestine, and there being no reference whatever to the captivity in Babylon, the omission of which is unimaginable, on the supposition that the latter of the two invasions was intended. The army of Sennacherib must have been the largest that ever entered Palestine, since only that division of it which invested Jerusalem, amounted to nearly 200,000 men (Isa. xxxvii., v. 36). It was marching forward to the conquest of Egypt, and, like a swarm of locusts, covered the whole land. All the fortified cities of Judah were taken (Isa. xxxvi., v. 1); the cultivated fields and vineyards were trodden down or consumed (xxxvii., v. 30), and nothing short of utter destruction seemed to await the inhabitants. The design of the Divine Spirit, to whose infinite mind the future event was present, in dictating the prediction in the language here employed, appears to have been, to deepen

3. Before them fire devoureth,
And behind them a flame burneth;
Before them the land is as the garden of Eden,
And behind them a desolate wilderness:
And there is no escape from them.
4. Their appearance is like the appearance of horses,
And they run like horsemen.
5. They bound like the rattle of chariots
On the tops of the mountains;
Like the crackling of the flame of fire
Devouring the stubble;
Like a mighty people arranged for battle.

the impressions produced by the plague of locusts, and thereby to excite to that repentance and amendment of life, which alone could secure to the Jewish nation the continuance of their national blessings.

3.—A description of the desolate state to which Judea was to be reduced, in language borrowed from that given of the drought (ch. i., v. 19).—*No escape.*—"P'letah," properly signifies those who have escaped in war; who have not been killed or taken prisoners; but it is also used of fruits of the earth which have not been destroyed (Exod. x., v. 5).

4.—The allegory now becomes special and minute in its features, which are selected from the phenomena and operations of an invading army, the subject of which it is to be understood; but having the invasion by the locusts as its basis, and, therefore, presenting these prominently to view, and comparing them to the army, which is thus studiously concealed. On this principle there is no difficulty in accounting for the particle of comparison so liberally used in this and the following verses. So strong is the resemblance of the head of the locust to that of a horse, that they are on this account called *cavalettes* by the Italians.—*Like horsemen.*—The point of comparison is the swiftness with which cavalry advance to the attack.

5.—*They bound.*—"Rikked" is used of the rapid and bounding course of chariots over a rough surface (Nah. iii., v. 2). Speaking of the noise made by a swarm of locusts, Mosier says: "On the 11th of June, while seated in our tents about noon, we heard a very unusual noise, that sounded like the rustling of a great wind at a distance. On looking up, we perceived an immense cloud, here and there transparent, in other parts quite black, that spread itself all over the sky, and at intervals shadowed the sun." It is, however, not improbable, that the sound here referred to is that produced by the large hind legs of the locust in leaping. The comparison at the end of the verse, is to the clashing of arms, and the shouting of an army on the point of engaging in battle.

6. Before them the people tremble;
   All faces withdraw their colour.
7. They run like mighty men;
   They scale the wall like warriors;
   They all march in their courses;
   They break not their ranks.
8. They press not each other;
   They march on, each in his path;

6.—*The people tremble.*—From "chul," *to turn round, twist oneself, writhe with pain*; then *to tremble.*—*Withdraw their colour.*—Grow pale with terror. See Nah. ii., v. 11. The ancient versions, Rashi, and others, concur in rendering: *every face like the blackness of a pot*; deriving "parur" from "pur;" hence "parur," *pot*, without "aleph."

7.—*They run.*—Here the description quite excels in the graphic. The comparison to warriors is admirably carried out. First, their rapid advance upon the city is specified; next, their scaling the walls in the most regular order; then their consentaneous encounter with the troops of defence, their invulnerability, their progress through the streets, their climbing the walls, and entering the windows of the houses, are set forth in terms of singular and appropriate beauty.—*They break not their ranks.*—"'Ibbet" has here the signification of *breaking up* the order or regularity with which a body of troops proceed when marching to the attack. Aben Ezra and Kimchi compare "ivveth," *to pervert, turn aside*, which comes nearly to the same thing. Gesenius thinks the verb is here used in a sense cognate with the significations in Kal and Hiphil, *to give* or *take a pledge*; but the idea of *exchange, change* is not clearly brought out. The regular military order with which the locusts advance, has been described by Cyril, Jerome, and Morier. The latter remarks: "They seemed to be impelled by one common instinct, and moved in one body, which had the appearance of being organised by a leader." Compare Prov. xxx., v. 27: "The locusts have no king, yet they go all forth in order," *i.e.*, with all the discipline of a well-ordered army.

8.—*They press not each other.*—"Dachak" signifies so to *press upon* one as to compel him to move from his place. Notwithstanding the immense crowds of the locusts, not only does none of them break the rank by deviating from the straight course which they pursue, but none forces his fellow from his rank. Their watchword may be said to be *onward*; for they never turn back. If they enter houses, they go straight through them, and out at the opposite side.—*Fall among the missiles.*—"Shelach" properly means any missile weapon thrown at an enemy, from "Shalach," *to send* or *cast forth*; but it is also frequently used of the sword. "Baad" is of a somewhat difficult determination. The ground idea seems to be that of *mediation, a being, or doing anything between two*; hence "hithpallel b'ad," *to make supplication* for any one, *i.e.*, by interposing *between* him and the party to whom the supplication is addressed. *Between*, or *among*, will

Though they fall among the missiles,
They break not up.
9. They run eagerly through the city;
They run upon the wall:
They go up into the houses;
They enter the windows like a thief.
10. Before them the earth trembleth;
The heavens shake;
The sun and the moon are darkened,
And the stars withdraw their shine.
11. And the Lord uttereth His voice before His army;
For His camp is very large;
Surely it is mighty, executing His order;
For great is the day of the Lord;
Yea, very terrible—Who can endure it?

suit most of the passages in which the word occurs. See Winer and Credner. Taking "Shelach" as a collective noun, the meaning of "naphal b'ad hashelach," will be *to fall among the missiles, i.e.*, to light, or come down among them; and referring "they break not up" to the whole swarm, what it expresses is, that they are not *broken up* or interrupted in their course. Compare a similar use of "shabar," *to break*, Dan. xi., v. 22.

9.—*Through the city.*—Any city or town that may lie in their way. Credner's appeal to ch. v., v. 9 (Authorised Version iii., v. 17), in proof that Jerusalem is specifically meant, cannot be sustained, since that part of the prophecy relates to a totally different subject. The scene is rather the land of Judah, with its fortified cities, which were overrun and plundered by the Assyrian troops.

10.—Though the language here employed may in part admit of a literal application to the obscuration of the air by the locusts, yet it is, as a whole, to be regarded, as a specimen, of the highly wrought hyperbolical, which forms one of the more distinguishing features of Hebrew poetry.

11.—*His voice.—The voice of the Lord* is here, as frequently, *thunder*, and not any word of command, as some have imagined. Compare Exod. ix., v. 23; xxix., v. 33; Ps. xviii., v. 14; lxxvii., vv. 18-19.—*Before His army.*—The locusts are called the *army* of God, with further reference to the numbers and powers of an army. One of the laws of Mohammed is thus expressed: *Ye shall not kill the locusts, for they are the army of God Almighty.*—And: *Lord of the locusts*, is one of the names of God among the Mohammedans. The entire description closes with the brief but pointed interrogation: "who can endure it?" To which the implied answer is: *None.*—Compare Mal. iii., v. 2, and Jer. x., v. 10.

12. Yet even now, saith the Lord,
Turn ye to me with all your heart,
And with fasting, and weeping, and mourning.
13. And rend your heart, and not your garments,
And turn to the Lord, your God;
For He is gracious and merciful,
Long-suffering, and of great kindness,
And repenteth of the evil.
14. Who knoweth? He may turn and repent,
And leave a blessing behind him—
An offering and a libation,
For the Lord your God.

15. Blow ye the trumpet in Zion!
Appoint a sacred fast;
Proclaim a day of restraint.
16. Assemble the people: convene a sacred assembly;
Collect the aged; gather the children,

12.—God himself is here introduced, urging the necessity of immediate humiliation.—*Even now.*—"'Atta," *now*, has special reference to the existing circumstances of the persons addressed, and the instant attention which the Divine message required. The combination "gam 'atta," marks strong feeling in the speaker, and the urgent nature of the subject to which it is introductory.

13.—The Prophet resumes his address, and founds upon the call of God, contained in the preceding verse, an exhortation to sincere inward repentance, which he supports by encouragements deduced from the benignity of the Divine character. Rending the garments was usual on occasions of great mourning. See Gen. xxxvii., vv. 29, 34; I Sam. iv., v. 12; I Kings xxi., v. 27; Ezra ix., vv. 3, 5; Isa. xxxvii., v. 1. This custom obtained not only by the Hebrews, but also among the Babylonians, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. *Long-suffering.*—He is not easily provoked to punish. —*The evil.*—Not the plague of the locusts, nor the invasions of the Assyrians, but the calamities in general which God brings upon mankind.

14.—*Who knoweth.*—This question, while it suggests the idea of the greatness of the sin to be pardoned, also conveys that of the possibility of such pardon.—*Leave a blessing.*—God's leaving a blessing behind Him, presupposes his return to visit His people in mercy. The first-fruits of prosperity are due to Him through whose blessing it is conferred.

15.—*Blow ye the trumpet.*—Compare v. 1, and ch. i., v. 14.

16.—*Assemble the people.*—Here the distribution into classes is more minute than in the latter of these passages. The mourning

And those that suck the breasts;
Let the bridegroom come forth from his chamber,
And the bride from her nuptial bed.

17. Between the porch and the altar,
Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep;
And let them say: "Spare Thy people, O Lord,
"And deliver not Thy heritage to reproach,
"That the nations should rule over them.
"Why should it be said among the people:
"'Where is their God?'"

18. Then the Lord will be jealous for His land,
And take compassion upon His people.

19. Yea, the Lord will speak, and say to His people:
"Behold! I will send you the corn,
"And the new wine, and the oil,
"And ye shall have abundance thereof;
"And I will no longer make you
"A reproach among the nations.

was to be universal.—*From her nuptial bed.*—The "chuppa" was the bridal couch, richly provided with a canopy, curtains, etc. Root "chaphaph," *to cover, protect.*

17.—*Between the porch.*—The porch before the temple, was an hundred and twenty cubits high, twenty broad from north to south, and ten long from east to west.—*The altar* was that of burnt-offering in the court of the priests. Here, with their backs towards the altar, on which they had nothing to offer, and their faces directed towards the residence of the *Shechina*, they were to weep, and make supplication on behalf of the people.—*Should rule over them.*—Rashi, Michaelis, Rosenmüller, Credner, Winer, Gesenius, Noyes, Hitzig, and Ewald, render: "That the nations should make a proverb of them;" but such construction is totally unauthorised by Hebrew usage. For upwards of *fifty* instances, in which the similar phrase occurs in the Hebrew Bible, it is never once used in the sense of employing *derision*, or *satirical language*, but uniformly in that of *likening*, or of *exercising rule or dominion.* In fact, the verb is nowhere used either with or without the preposition in the signification of deriding. It is the noun alone that is thus employed in the forms to *be, set, give*, etc., *to a derision.* Ezek. xvi., v. 44, forms no exception. The Targum: "that nations should rule over them." Thus also Kimchi, Aben Ezra, Newcome, Dathe, Boothroyd, Hengstenberg, Fuerstenthal, and others; and there does not appear to be any reason why it could ever have been rendered otherwise, but for the influence of the hypothesis, that the preceding part of the prophecy relates to locusts, and not to political enemies.

19-20.—In the former of these verses, respect is had to the removal of the calamity from which the nation was suffering at the time

20. "I will also remove the Northern from you,
"And drive him into a dry and barren land;
"His van toward the Eastern sea,
"And his rear toward the Western sea;

the prophecy was delivered; in the latter, that of the foreign enemy by whom the country was to be invaded. The article is placed before "dagan," etc., to give them prominence, as the principal objects which had suffered from the locusts, and which were now to be restored.

20.—*The northern.*—The term "ha-tzephoni," the *Northern, Northlander*, or, as Coverdale renders: *Him of the North*, is of prime importance in the interpretation of the prophecy. It has been urged against its having any reference to the locusts, that they visit Palestine from the *south*, and not from the *north*; but this objection can scarcely be regarded as valid, since, though they do not usually come from that quarter, yet they may be carried by a south wind across Arabia Deserta, and then, when to the north of Palestine, be driven south, or south-west into that country. That, however, which determines the question, is the addition of the patronymic "yod" to "tzaphon," indicating that the north was not merely the quarter whence the subject of discourse came, but that its *native country*, lay to the north of Palestine: just as "hatemani," *the Temanite*, means *the southern*, or he who dwells to the right of Palestine; "Mitzri," *a native Egyptian*; in Arabic *a Meccite, a Medinite, i.e.*, a native or inhabitant of Mecca and Medina. Now it is agreed on all hands, that the native country of the locusts is the regions of Arabia, the Lybian deserts, and the Sahara of Egypt; so that according to the *usus loquendi*, they cannot be meant by the term here employed. Indeed, so much has this been felt by some of those who have advocated the hypothesis that *locusts* are intended, that they have been under the necessity of having recourse to far-fetched expedients, in order to support it. Justi, contrary to all analogy, proposes to render: "the locusts that march *northwards*," or to explain the term "north" of what is dark, hostile, or barbarous; which construction of the meaning is, in part, adopted by Hitzig. Maurer, on the other hand, setting aside these and other methods, has recourse to the Arabic: *deposuit excrementum*, and thence deduces for "tzephoni" the signification of *stercoreus*, or, in case this derivation should not be approved, to *decorticare radendo*, and considers the reference to be either to the injurious influence of their dung on the trees, herbage, etc., or to their stripping them of their verdure.

On the supposition that by "ha-tzephoni," *the northern*, the Assyrians are meant, every difficulty vanishes. And that they may be so termed, is proved by Zeph. ii., v. 13: "And he will stretch out his hand (al-tzaphon) upon *the north*, and will destroy *Assyria*, and will make *Nineveh* a desolation, and dry as a wilderness." The Jews were accustomed to call Assyria and Babylonia the North, and the North Country, because they lay in that direction from Palestine.

The geographical specification which follows in the verse, is designed to express the universality of the destruction of the

"And his odour shall come up,
"And his stench ascend;
"Because he hath done great things."

21. Fear not, O land! rejoice and be glad,
For the Lord doeth great things.
22. Fear not, ye beasts of the field!
For the pastures of the desert spring up;
For the tree beareth its fruit;
The fig-tree and the vine yield their strength.
23. Rejoice, ye sons of Zion!
And be glad in the Lord, your God;

Assyrians. They were to be dispersed in every other direction but that from which they had come. By "the Eastern Sea" is meant the Asphaltic Lake; by "the Western Sea," the Mediterranean; and by "a dry and barren land," the deserts of Arabia. Literally the words "ha-kadmoni" and "ha-acharon," signify what is *before* and *behind*, and are applied geographically in reference to the Orientals reckoning the different quarters according to the positions of front and rear, right and left, while they face the east, which is with them the principal point of the compass. The language of the Prophet is figurative, the metaphor, being still borrowed from the locusts, which perish when blown by a storm into the sea, or the sandy desert. "Panim" and "Soph," *face* and *end* are here used in the military sense of *van* and *rear*, and cannot, without violence, be interpreted of the swarm of locusts, and a brood which succeeded them.—*He hath done great things.*—These words convey the idea of moral agency, and can with no propriety be interpreted of the locusts. The phrase is obviously used here in a bad sense, and indicates the pride of the Assyrians. Compare II Kings xxi., v. 6, where a similar idiom occurs. As employed in the following verse of our Prophet, it is placed in antithesis with the sense in which it is here used, and is to be differently understood: viz., of the great things that God would do for His people.

21-22.—In these verses there is a beautiful gradation. First, the land, which has been destroyed by the enemy, is addressed in a prosopopoeia; then the irrational animals which had suffered from the famine; and, lastly, the inhabitants themselves. All are called upon to cast off their fears, and rejoice in the happy change which God would effect. Desolation, barrenness, and famine, would disappear, and times of prosperity and happiness return.

23.—*Ye sons of Zion.*—Properly the inhabitants of Jerusalem, but here evidently used to denote those of the land generally, of which Jerusalem was the metropolis, and *Zion* the centre of religious influence.—*The autumn-rain in just quantity.*—"Moreh litzedakah" is rendered by the Targum: "Your teacher in righteousness;" which Abarbanel explains: "This is the king Messiah, who shall

For He giveth you the autumn-rain in just quantity;
Yea, he causeth showers to come down for you—
The autumn and spring-rain as formerly.

teach them the way in which they should walk, and the works that they should do." The same, or a similar construction of the words is found in the Vulgate, Rashi, and most of the early Lutheran interpreters, and among the moderns, Hengstenberg, the latter of whom contends for it at considerable length, and decidedly considers the passage to be one of the Messianic prophecies. That "Moreh" signifies *teacher*, is beyond all doubt; see II Chron. xv., v. 3; Job xxxvi., v. 22; Isa. ix, v. 15; xxx., v. 20. To such interpretation, however, there appears to me the following insuperable objections. First, it is repugnant to the circumstances of the context. Secondly, the repetition of the same term "moreh," immediately after, where, as all allow, it must be taken in the acceptation of *rain*.—And, thirdly, the peculiar force and coherence of the words "eth-hamoreh," and "geshem," "moreh," and "malkosh." The emphasis given to "moreh," by prefixing not only the *article*, but also the determinating particle "eth," shows that the Prophet had some immediate and definite object in view, which we cannot imagine to have been any other than the autumnal rain, which was indispensable any year, and more especially after such a season of drought, to prepare the ground for nourishing the seed. See on the force of "eth," Gesenius Lexicon. The same consideration will account for the form, and the particular signification of "litzedakah" in this place. The "lamed" is to be taken adverbially, as pointing out the rule or measure according to which the rain was to be bestowed, which is declared to be "tzedakah," so that the meaning will be, *in just quantity, adequately*, in the proportion suitable to the exigency of the case. "Tzadak," the root from which this noun is derived, signifies to be *just, right*; to come up to certain claims, *to be what a person or thing ought to be*. Compare Lev. xix., v. 36, where "tzedek" is used of weights and measures that were exact, or came up to the demands of the law. Some propose to render "litzedakah" *bountifully*; but this would give the *Chaldee* rather than the *Hebrew* signification. Ewald renders: "the early rain for justification," and explains it of the nation being again accounted righteous by God. To the objection of Hengstenberg, that if "Moreh" in the first half of the verse does not designate a different Divine benefit from "Moreh" in the second, an idle tautology will ensue, it is only necessary to reply, that the words occur in parallelism, and that in the second instance "Moreh" is merely a resumption for the sake of dividing the "geshem" mentioned immediately before into its two regular divisions, the autmn and spring-rain.

The reading "Yoreh," which is found instead of the former "Moreh" in twenty-three Hebrew MSS., in the Jerusalem Talmud, and as Keri in the margin of two of De Rossi's Codices, is in favour of the rendering *rain*. With respect to the latter occurrence of the word, there is no variety of reading.—*He causeth showers*.—"Geshem," such rain as is violent, and pours down as it were in a body.—*As formerly*.—To render *in the first month*, would involve a

24. So that the floors shall be full of grain,
And the vats shall overflow with new wine and oil.
25. Thus He will make good to you the years
Which the swarming locust hath devoured,
The licking locust, the consuming locust,
And the gnawing locust;
My great army which I sent against you.
26. And ye shall eat plentifully and be satisfied,
And praise the name of the Lord, your God,
Who hath dealt wondrously with you:
And my people shall never be ashamed.
27. Then shall ye know, that I am in the midst of Israel,
And that I, the Lord, am your God, and none else;
And my people shall never be ashamed.

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contradiction, since only *one* of the two rains could happen in that month. It seems, therefore, necessary to suppose an ellipsis of "kaph," the participle of comparison, and read: "Kebarishon," *as formerly*, or *as in former times*. Compare Jer. i., v. 22; xxxiii., v. 11.

24.—*So that.*—The "vau" is consequential. Here the happy results of the plentiful and seasonable rains are set forth.

25.—That the Prophet has here in view the plague of locusts described in ch. i., cannot well be doubted. The name, though placed in a different order, are identical with those there specified.—*My great army.*—They are called God's great *army*, a name still given to them by the Arabs. See on verse 11. Though the scourge lasted only one year, yet as they not only destroyed the whole produce of that year, but also what was laid up in store for future years, there is no impropriety in the plural form of "Shanim," *years*. The term is used metonymically for the produce and supply of years. The loss of these God promises to recompense or make good by not only furnishing them with an abundance of temporal enjoyments, but affording them the delightful experience of His presence and favour as their covenant God. This promise is amplified in verses 26-27.

26-27.—Here the future prosperity of the Jewish nation is described in terms, which obviously characterise the period which succeeded that of the Babylonish captivity. The Divine recompense was not merely to cover the evils sustained by the ravages of the locusts; it was to extend to those which both the Assyrians and the Chaldeans were to inflict upon the nation.

27.—*That I am in the midst.*—By God's being in the midst of His people, is meant the special manifestation of His presence in the communications of His favour.

CHAPTER III.

1. And it shall come to pass afterwards,
   That I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh;
   And your sons and daughters shall prophesy;
   Your old men shall dream dreams;
   Your young men shall see visions;
2. And even upon the male and female servants
   I will pour out my spirit in those days.
3. And I will show wonders in heaven, and on earth;
   Blood, and fire, and columns of smoke.

1.—*Afterwards.*—Most commentators contend that this chapter refers to the time of the Messiah. Kimchi observes: "It is said: 'and ye shall know that I am in the midst of you.' What He says is: Now ye know, but not with a perfect knowledge, for ye will again commit sin before Me; but after this knowledge there shall come a time when ye shall know Me with a perfect knowledge, and shall sin no more, namely, in the days of Messiah."—*Upon all flesh.*—Mankind generally, without distinction of nation or country. To restrict this phrase to the Jews, as is done by Aben Ezra, Kimchi, Albo, Hitzig, and others, is irreconcilable with Scripture usage, according to which it constantly signifies mankind generally, or the whole human race. So Isa. lvi., v. 7: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the people;" Zech. xiv., v. 10: "In that day the Lord shall be Unity and His name Unity."—*Shall prophesy.*—"Naba," is used not merely to denote the foretelling of future events, but to express the giving of utterance to Divine truth under a miraculous impulse, or the pretending to such impulse, whether the utterance was made in the way of direct communication, as was the case when the Prophets addressed their hearers, or by the rehearsal or singing of sacred hymns under extraordinary Divine impulse, as when Miriam sung at the Red Sea (Exod. xv., vv. 20-21); or when the sons of the Prophets and Saul prophesied (I Sam. x., vv. 5-6; xix., vv. 19-24).—*Dreams—visions.*—Both belonged to the different modes in which God revealed His will to the Prophets. Compare Numb, xii., v. 6; I Sam. xxviii., vv. 6, 15; Jer. xxiii., vv. 25-8; Dan. vii., vv. 1-2.

2.—*And even.*—None would be excluded, not even the lowest and most despised *servants*, from a participation in the bestowment of Divine influence.

3.—*Wonders.*—Whatever objects are *unusual, portentous*, or *miraculous* in their character.—*Columns of smoke.*—"Timroth" only occurs once besides, and, as here, in construction with "'Ashan," viz., Song iii., v. 6. There can be little doubt that it is derived from "tamar," *to be erect*, whence "tamar, *the palm-tree*, from its tall and erect growth.

4. The sun shall be turned into darkness,
And the moon into blood,
Before the great and terrible day of the Lord come.
5. And it shall come to pass,
That whosoever shall call upon the name
Of the Lord shall escape:
(For in Mount Zion,
And in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,
As the Lord hath said).
And among those who are left
Shall be whom the Lord shall call.

CHAPTER IV.

1. For behold! in those days, and at that time,
When I shall reverse the captivity
Of Judah and Jerusalem:
2. I will gather all the nations,
And bring them down to the valley of Jehoshaphat,
And will plead with them there,
On account of my people,

4.—*The sun shall be turned.*—This is an instance of what we may call an inverted parallelism. Having mentioned generally that God would show wonders in *heaven* and on *earth*, the Prophet first instances the *signs on earth*, and then those *in heaven*. The blood, fire, and columns of smoke, will be the signs on earth, and the turning of the sun into darkness, and the moon into blood, will be the signs in heaven.

5.—*In Mount Zion and in Jerusalem.*—Both are here, as in other places of the Prophets, to be taken as the seat and centre of the true worship of God; the locality in itself, being not essential.

1.—*In those days and at that time.*—Most Jewish commentators agree that the "days and times" here specified are identical with the period spoken of in the preceding chapter.

2.—*Valley of Jehoshaphat.*—By "the valley of Jehoshaphat" some understand the narrow valley, through which the brook Kedron flows, between the city of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives. Others suppose it to be a designation of the valley, otherwise called *the valley of blessing* (II Chron. xx., v. 26); but as neither of these localities at all comport with the magnitude of the subject treated of by the Prophet, we have no alternative but that of considering the words,

And my heritage Israel,
Whom they have scattered among the nations,
And then divided among them my land.
3. And have cast lots for my people,
And given a boy for a harlot,
And sold a girl for wine, which they drank.
4. And truly, what are ye to me, O Tyre and Zidon!
And all the circuits of Philistia?
Will ye retaliate upon me?
If, indeed, ye retaliate upon me,

not as constituting a proper name, or the name of any specific locality, but as symbolical in their import. The literal meaning of the original is "the valley where God judgeth;" the term "valley" appears to have been selected on account of such locality being mentioned in Scripture as the theatre of military conflict. This view of the subject is supported by the Targum, in which the words are not retained, but translated: *the plain of the distribution of judgment.*— The nations to be punished are restricted, to such as have scattered the Hebrews, and occupied their land.

3.—The Jews were frequently treated in the most ignominius manner by their enemies. Such conduct is here affectingly set forth. That it was customary to cast lots for those who were taken captive, see Obad. v. 11; Nah. iii., v. 10.—*Given a boy for a harlot.*—This does not mean the exchange of the one for the other, but the payment of the captive for an act of sensual indulgence; just as the selling of a girl for wine, means giving her in compensation for a draught of it. Compare Gen. xxxviii., v. 17; Deut. xxii., v. 18; and the Arabic proverb: "the son of a whore hired with oil." Chardens mentions that when the Tartars came into Poland, they carried off all the children they could, and, finding at length that they were not redeemed, sold them at the low price of a crown. Dimock remarks: Instead of rendering "bazonah" *for a harlot*, would it not be more agreeable to the context to render for *food*, deriving it from "zun" *to feed*?

4.—*What are ye to me.*—Think ye that I make any account of you? or that ye can successfully oppose yourselves to me? The interrogation is altogether different in *meaning*, as it is in *form*, from the idiom "mah li velachem" *what have we in common*? with which Kimchi compares it.—*Tyre and Zidon.*—Among the nations bordering on the country of the Jews, which had rendered themselves particularly obnoxious to the Divine wrath, were those on the west. See Isa. xiv., v. 28, and ch. xxiii.—*Circuits.*—Or *districts.* They were properly provinces, of which there were five in number, each governed by a "Seren" *prince* or *lord.*—*Will ye retaliate.*—"Gamal" signifies to *do good* or *evil* to anyone; then to *recompense* him, either with good or evil; to *reward, retaliate.* The meaning here seems to

Speedily and swiftly I will bring your retaliation
Back upon your own head;
5. Because ye have taken my silver and my gold;
And my goodly objects of delight
Ye have carried into your temples.
6. And the sons of Judah, and the sons of Jerusalem,
Have ye sold to the sons of the Javanites,
To remove them far from their own borders.
7. Behold! I will rouse them from the place
Whither ye have sold them;
And bring back your retaliation
Upon your own head;
8. I will sell your sons and your daughters
Into the hands of the sons of Judah,
And they shall sell them to the Sabeans;
To a distant nation; for the Lord hath spoken it.

be, that if these bordering states attempted to revenge the victories gained over them by the Jews, they should be dealt with in the way of Divine retaliation. God here speaks of what was done to His people as done to Himself.—*Speedily and swiftly.*—The original is an asyndeton. Compare Isa. v., v. 26, where the order of the words is reversed.

5.—As in the preceding verse, God had identified Himself with His people, so here He speaks of their property as His.—*My goodly objects of delight.*—Some suppose the precious vessels belonging to the temple are meant, but the articles of private property most highly esteemed by the Jews are more probably meant; since it does not appear that ever the enemies specified by Joel plundered the temple at Jerusalem, though express mention is made of the plunder of the royal palace by the Philistines, etc. (II Chron. xxi., v 17).—*Carried into your temples.*—It was customary to hang up or deposit in the idolatrous temples, as presents dedicated to the gods, certain portions of the spoils taken in war. Arrian ii., 24; Curtius, iv., 2.

6.—*Sons of the Javanites.*—The Grecians. Credner, Hitzig; and some others, think that the Prophet refers to Javanites of Arabia Felix, mentioned Ezek. xxvii., v. 19; but the reasons they adduce in favour of their opinion are insufficient to establish the point. In Ezek. xxvii., v. 13, Javan is mentioned, along with Tubal and Meshech, as trading in slaves with the merchants of Tyre. Slavery formed an important article of Phœnician commerce, and equally so of that carried on by the Greeks, to whom the former might easily convey the Jewish captives. So famous did the island of Delos become as a slave mart, that sometimes 10,000 were bought and sold in a single day.

CHAPTER V.

1. Proclaim ye this among the nations;
   Prepare war; rouse the mighty;
   Let all the warriors approach and come up!
2. Beat your coulters into swords,
   And your pruning-hooks into spears;
   Let the feeble say: "I am mighty."
3. Hasten and come, all ye nations around,
   And gather yourselves together; there,
   Where the Lord will bring down thy mighty ones.
4. Let the nations be roused; let them come up
   To the valley of Jehoshaphat;
   For there will I sit to judge all the nations around.
5. Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe;

1.—*This.*—"This" refers to what immediately follows: the assembling of the different nations, in order to engage in the wars in which, in succession, they were as political states, to be subdued and perish. "Kadesh" is not simply to *prepare,* as Kimchi explains it, but to prepare by the use of religious rites and ceremonies, such as the heathen employed when they undertook a military enterprise.

2.—Such was to be the extent of the conflict, that, in the lack of a sufficient number of arms, the ordinary implements of husbandry would be converted into weapons.

3.—*Hasten.*—"'Ush," in all probability the same in signification with "chush," *to hasten.* See Rashi. — *Will bring down.* — "Hanchath," root "nahath," *to descend, go,* or *come down.* So Kimchi and Aben Ezra; and the Prophet addresses himself (as it were) to the enemies of Israel, to whom he says that God will throw his mighty men in the dust. The Targum, however, renders: "the Lord will *break down* thy mighty men," as if the root were "chathath."

4.—To give prominence to the interest which God had in what was to take place, the metaphor is here changed into that of a judicial process, in which He acts as judge, and gives a just decision against the enemies of His people.—*Valley of Jehoshaphat.*—See chap. iv., v. 2. Here, as in that verse, the nations to be punished were those *circumjacent* to Judea.

5.—*Put ye in the sickle.*—The Prophet now employs metaphors taken from the harvest and the vintage, which strikingly express the havoc and destruction effected by war: the one denoting the slaughter or cutting down of armies, and the other the effusion of their blood. The same images are similarly employed Isa. xvii., vv. 5-6; lxiii.,

Come, descend, for the wine-press is full;
The vats run over; for their wickedness is great.

6. Multitudes! Multitudes in the valley of decision!
For the day of the Lord is near in the valley of decision.

7. The sun and the moon shall be darkened,
And the stars shall withdraw their shine.

8. And the Lord will roar out of Zion,
And from Jerusalem will He utter His voice;
And the heavens and earth shall shake—
But the Lord will be a refuge to His people;
A stronghold to the children of Israel.

v. 2; Lament. i., v. 15. The sickles of the East, as represented on Egyptian monuments, pretty much resemble ours, only some of them were smaller, and had more the appearance of a knife hooked at the end.—*Descend.*—"R'du," from "yarad" *to descend*, some take to be used here in the acceptation of the Arabic *calcavit*. Thus the Sept. But as in order to tread the grapes, it was necessary to *go down* into the wine-press, it seems better to abide by the ordinary signification of the Hebrew verb, and to consider the action of treading to be implied, rather than expressed. At the close of the verse the metaphor is dropped, and the cause of the thing signified is boldly presented to view.

6.—*Multitudes! Multitudes.*—A Hebraism for *immense multitudes*. This rendering is preferable to that of *tumult*. In the preceding verses, the nations are called upon to assemble, and here the Prophet, beholding them congregated in obedience to the summons, breaks out into an appropriate exclamation in regard to their number.—*Valley of decision.*—Piscator, Michaelis, Holzhausen, and Credner, take "charutz" in the sense of *threshing*. Kimchi, Tanchum, Abulwalid, Newcome, and some others, render *excision*; but the Sept., Syr., Targum, Dathe, Rosenmüller, Gesenius, Hitzig, Maurer, Ewald, and Fürst, translate the word by *decision* or *judgment*, which seems more in keeping with the name of the valley, and the idea of a judicial process, set forth in verse 4. Compare for the acceptation *to determine, decide*, attaching to the verb "charatz" (I Kings xx., v. 40; Isa. x., v. 22). The meaning is the decision or doom of the nations to which the prophecy refers. The repetition of "Emek hacharutz" heightens the effect.

7.—A figurative mode of representing the removal of the political rulers of the world.

8.—*Will roar.*—"Shaag," *to roar*, is properly used of the *lion*, but is metaphorically applied to *God*, to express the terrible majesty with which He encounters His foes. Compare Jerem. xxv., v. 30; Amos i., v. 2; iii., v. 8.

9. And ye shall know that I, the Lord, am your God,
Dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain;
And Jerusalem shall be holy;
Foreigners shall invade her no more.
10. And it shall come to pass in that day,
That the mountains shall drop new wine,
And the hills shall flow with milk,
And all the channels of Judah shall flow with water,
And a fountain shall go forth from the house of the Lord,
And water the valley of Acacias.
11. Egypt shall become a desolation,
And Edom a desolate wilderness;
For the violence done to the children of Judah,
In whose land they shed innocent blood.
12. But Judah shall be inhabited for ever,
And Jerusalem to successive generations.

9.—*Ye shall know.*—"Yadà," is here as in Isa. lii., v. 6; lx., v. 16; Hosh. ii., v. 20, to be taken in the acceptation of *experiencing*, knowing by experimental proofs of the Divine kindness.—*Shall be holy.*—To express the perfect immunity from idolatry, by which Jerusalem should be characterised, "kodesh," *holiness* in the abstract, is used. Compare Obad. 17.—*Foreigners.*—By "Zarim," *strangers*, or *barbarians*, foreign enemies are meant.

10.—A splendid figurative representation of the extraordinary prosperity to be accorded to the Jewish nation after the destruction of their enemies.—*The valley of Acacias.*—"The valley of Shittim," *i.e.*, Acacias. There was a place of this name in the country of Moab (Numb. xxv., v. 1; xxxiii., v. 49; Josh. ii., v. 1); but most interpreters think that the valley is meant through which the Kidron flows to the Dead Sea. Consistency of interpretation requires us to understand this part of the verse figuratively of the most desert and arid spots, such as the Acacia is fond of. Fertility was to go forth from the presence of the Lord into the whole land. Viewed in this light, there is no incongruity in representing the water as extending even across the Jordan, however impossible it might be as a physical phenomenon. Compare Ezek. xlvii., vv. 1-12; Zech. xiv., v. 8.

11.—*For the violence done to.*—"Chamas b'ne Yehudah," *the violence of the sons* of Judah, is the Genitive of object, meaning the violence done *to* them. Compare Obad. 10. The pronominal affix in "artzam," refers to the Jews spoken of immediately before.

12.—*Shall be inhabited.*—"Teaheb," is used passively, as in Isa. xiii., v. 20.

13. And I will regard their blood as innocent,
Which I have not regarded as innocent;
Even I, the Lord, that dwelleth in Zion.

13.—In the words: "Venikkethi damam lo nikkethi" there is an ellipsis of "asher," after "damam," the affix in which refers to the *Jews*, not to their *enemies*. Almost all the interpreters have stumbled at "nikkethi," the verb here employed, but they have generally got over the difficulty, by giving to it the signification of "nikkamti," *I have avenged*, a signification which nowhere attaches to it in the Hebrew Bible. For the different explanations see Pococke. "Nakkeh" in Niph. signifies *to be morally pure, to be free from punishment*; in Piel, as here, *to regard, pronounce*, or *treat as innocent, to pardon*. The words were doubtless suggested by "dam naki" in the preceding verse, and are to be rendered: "I will regard their blood as innocent, which I have not regarded as innocent;" *i.e.*, *I will pardon those whom I treated as guilty*. My people, whom I have punished on account of their apostasies, I will henceforth regard with favour and love. The affix in "damam," corresponds to the same in "Artzam," v. 11.

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